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the first of these is the fact that the
 system is not self-sufficient. It
 requires a constant input of
 energy from the outside world.
 This is a serious disadvantage
 because it means that the system
 is always vulnerable to attack
 from the outside. The second
 disadvantage is that the system
 is not very flexible. It is
 designed to work in a very
 specific way and it is not
 easy to change it. The third
 disadvantage is that the system
 is not very reliable. It is
 prone to breakdown and it
 is not always easy to repair.

There are, however, some
 advantages to the system. The
 first is that it is very simple
 and easy to use. The second
 is that it is very cheap. The
 third is that it is very reliable.
 The fourth is that it is very
 flexible. The fifth is that it
 is very secure. The sixth is
 that it is very easy to maintain.
 The seventh is that it is very
 efficient. The eighth is that it
 is very safe. The ninth is that
 it is very accurate. The tenth
 is that it is very precise.

The system is, therefore, a
 very useful one. It is a very
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 It is a very cheap system. It
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THE CHILDREN'S SAVIOUR

THE CHILDREN'S SAVIOUR.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CHILDREN

ON THE

**Life of our Lord and Saviour
Jesus Christ**

BY

EDWARD OSBORNE

**MISSION PRIEST OF THE SOCIETY OF S. JOHN EVANGELIST
COWLEY, OXFORD**



**RIVINGTONS
WATERLOO PLACE, LONDON**

MDCCCLXXXII

141. 72. 129.

TO THE CHILDREN WHO READ THIS BOOK

THE Teachings you will find in this book were given to the children of a Sunday School at the Children's Service on Sunday afternoons, and on Good Friday and Ascension Day.

Some of the people who heard them thought that other children would like to know these things as well as the children of that school, and that they would help them to be good children; so I have written them down for you.

When these Teachings were given in the Church we had a large blackboard, eight feet long and six feet wide, and a good friend who loves children used to draw pictures on the board for me. These pictures have been photographed, and you have them here in this book, that you may look at them when you read what is written.

You will, I hope, find this a good book to read on Sundays. Perhaps you live where there is no service for children and no Sunday School. You can't understand the sermons at the morning service, and have nothing to do in the afternoon. You can read this book in the afternoon.

If I were you, I would not sit down and try to read it all through like a story-book; you will get

tired of it if you do. The best way would be to read only one Teaching and look at only one picture on one day, and think about it during the rest of the day, and try and do what the Teaching tells you. In this way the book will last you some months, and when you have finished it you can begin again.

If there are several of you in the family, I should advise you to ask father or mother to read it to you. Then all the little ones who can't read much would hear and learn too, and father or mother might explain anything you did not understand.

Or you might take the book to Sunday School, if you go to one, and the teacher might read it to the whole class. Some of the other children might like this, because you know they might not all be able to buy it, and perhaps would have no one to give it to them.

I want you to remember a few things as you read and listen to the book.

The Teachings began with Advent Sunday 1880, and ended with Whitsunday 1881. Of course they fit the Sundays of those years best, but they will do for any year. You must ask father or mother to explain to you why the Sundays don't come the same in all years.

Sometimes you will find that I have said a thing twice or more times. I have done this on purpose, because I want you to remember. Don't you know that some people say that children's heads are like *sieves*, which won't hold water, it

all runs out? Now I don't think that is a kind or nice thing to say, but still children do forget sometimes, don't they? So you must not mind being told a thing two or three times when it is something I particularly want you to remember.

Sometimes you will find very little things put in very simple words, and you will be likely to say, "I knew that before!" Perhaps you did, but then everybody does not know so much as you. Besides, this book is intended for children of all sorts and all ages, some very little and some much older. I have tried to say something for all.

The pictures are very simple, only one figure in each of them except the pictures for the first Sunday after the Epiphany and for Whitsunday. You can ask your father or mother to tell you more about them. And if you like you can copy the pictures on your slate, and then you can put in as many more figures as you choose. But it is not well to have too many things to look at; you might spend all the time looking at them and so not get any teaching at all.

Now let me repeat one thing—DON'T READ THIS BOOK AS A STORY-BOOK.

Read it *slowly*. Read it *carefully*. Read it *thoughtfully*.

It is written for you that you may learn about your Lord and Saviour JESUS CHRIST; that you may be able to try to be like Him; that being like Him, you may live for the glory of God.

When you read it will you say a prayer that God

will bless this book that it may do all this for you, that it may help you to be really and truly good?

And when you pray, will you sometimes think of, and say a prayer for, the children who first heard these Teachings?

Pray that you and they, living for JESUS CHRIST, may be led by His HOLY SPIRIT all through your lives, and come at last to His heavenly kingdom.

They are the children of the Sunday School of the CHURCH OF THE ADVENT, at Boston, in the United States of America.

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THE
CHILDREN'S SAVIOUR

A



EVE—A MOTHER OF OUR LORD.

Gen. iii. 16-24.

The First Sunday in Advent.

EVE—A MOTHER OF OUR LORD.

GENESIS iii. 13-24.

TO-DAY we begin again the Church's year. You know that the Church and the world do not begin their year at the same time. The world begins on the first of January, but the Church begins to-day, the Sunday nearest to S. Andrew's Day.

And to-day, like the other Sundays, has its own name. It is called—the First Sunday in Advent, or Advent Sunday. It is the first of four Sundays which come before Christmas Day. The time from to-day until Christmas Day is called Advent, and these are the four Sundays in Advent.

Advent means *coming*. The word always means this whenever we use it. But I think you know, do you not, that when we use it in Church, or read it in the Prayer-Book, we always mean a particular coming, the coming of a particular Person? That Person is our Lord JESUS CHRIST. So to-day we ought, if we are good children of the Church, to *think* about the coming into the world of JESUS CHRIST.

It is a long time since He came. Eighteen hundred and eighty years. We count all our years now from that in which He came. It is right that we should do so, because His coming made such a change in the world; it was like a new beginning. So we must think of His coming.

But beside this, we must remember that JESUS CHRIST is coming *again*. We are not only to look back to the time when He came, but to look forward to the time when He will come again. How glad we shall be to see Him!

So Advent tells us of both His comings: the first long ago; the second, which we are expecting, and which may be on any day.

And this season of Advent helps us in another way too. It helps us to prepare for Christmas. We are all going to keep Christmas Day, because it is the day on which JESUS CHRIST was first seen when He came into the world. If we prepare well for Christmas, and keep Christmas well when it comes, I think we shall prepare well and be ready to meet JESUS CHRIST when He comes again. And this is what we want to help you to do.

So we are going to-day, and through Advent, in our lessons, to think about the coming of JESUS our Lord. Then at Christmas we will see how He came. After that, if GOD lets us, we will see how JESUS CHRIST lived, how He died, how He *rose again*, how He went into heaven, where He *is now*, and how He is coming again. If we think

of these things well, we shall be able to live as He wishes us to live, we shall be His good children, and shall be expecting Him, and prepared to meet Him when He comes.

Now let us go quite back to the beginning of the world, and think about those who first expected the coming of JESUS CHRIST.

You all know, I suppose, that when GOD had made the world and got it ready, He made the first man like ourselves, and called him ADAM; that when GOD saw that Adam was lonely, He made him a wife, who was called EVE.

When they were made, GOD put them in a beautiful garden, and watched them to see if they would be good. They might eat what they pleased, and have all they saw round them, except one thing. They were not to touch one Tree in the garden. GOD gave them this one command to see if they would obey Him. If they touched it they would die.

You remember how Satan tempted them and persuaded them to do what GOD forbade. And so they died. Their *bodies* did not die. They still lived on the earth, and could walk and talk. But their *souls* were dead. When GOD made them He breathed into them His own Life. When they did wrong they lost this Life, and so their souls were dead; they were dead in sin.

But though they had done so wrong GOD loved them, and did not want them to remain dead. So He promised them that He would send a Saviour—

One Who should come into the world that they might have life again, One Who would save them from death.

That was very wonderful, but GOD in His love promised more even than that. He promised that this Saviour should be a Child of Eve. His exact words were, "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head." So Eve is a mother of JESUS CHRIST. Of course you know that the Blessed Virgin Mary was the mother of JESUS. But so was Eve a great many generations back. We call our mother's mother our *grandmother*, and her mother our *great-grandmother*, and so we may go back to Eve ourselves ; but you see it is *mother* all the way through. So Eve is really the first mother of our Lord JESUS. I think this is the grandest and best way to think of her, and the way in which she would like us to think.

But Eve did not know all that we know. She did not know there would be all these generations ; she did not know there would be many mothers after her before the Saviour was born. So when she had her first child she thought he was the promised Saviour, and she said, "I have gotten a man, the Lord."

How disappointed she must have been when she saw him grow up, and instead of being good become very bad ! How dreadful for her to have him kill his brother Abel, as we know he did ! How sad it *was* for her as she grew old, for she lived many *years*, and had many children, to see her children *quarrelling* and doing all kinds of bad things !

How sad she must have been when she thought that all this came from her own sin! How tired she must have been looking for and expecting the Child Who was to give her and her other children life, and yet Who seemed as if He would never come.

Let us look now at our picture. It is a picture of Eve sitting and resting under a tree. She seems very, very tired. God had told her and her husband Adam that they were to till the ground. She seems to have been working hard, until perhaps at evening-time she has sat down to rest. Her hoe has dropped from her hand, as if her poor tired fingers could not hold it any longer. Just in front of her is a large thistle, one of those thistles which God had said would come because of sin. She ought to destroy it, but she seems to have no strength left.

As she sits there how she must be longing for the promised Child! When would He come and deliver her from her toil? When would He come and make the world His own again? When would He come and take away sin, and pain, and death, and give life again? Oh, how she must have longed for Him!

And as she sits there she is *looking upward*. To Whom is she looking? Surely it is to God. God has promised, and He will keep His word though the time may seem very long to wait. And so, though she is tired and sorrowful at the sin and trouble, yet I think she is not altogether unhappy.

She can find rest in looking up to GOD, in thinking about Him, in telling Him her troubles, and in praying to Him to give her strength to work, and to send soon the Saviour He has promised. And in all her trouble there must have been this joy, that it was to be her own Child Who should undo the harm she had done. How good GOD was to her ! How she must have loved Him !

We will try and see what Eve teaches us. JESUS CHRIST is coming again, and we are looking for Him, and we want to be ready for Him. And we are going to keep Advent and Christmas, that they may help us to be ready. How shall we do this ?

First, like Eve, we have to *work*. God has given us all something to do. When father and mother go out, they often leave the children something to do in their absence. One child has some sewing to do ; another perhaps has the baby to take care of ; another to make the fire and have the kettle boiling ; another to get his lessons ready for to-morrow. We would not like father or mother to come back and find that we had not done these things. Susie had left her sewing to read a story-book ; Jane had left the baby to see a show ; Henry had left his lessons to play with Tom. No ; we should like them to find the house tidy, floor swept, fire lighted, lessons learned, *children all good and happy*. Then they would *be glad !*



Now, children, remember that when you are doing these things well you are not only obeying your parents and pleasing them, but you are doing what JESUS CHRIST has given you to do ; you are pleasing *Him*, you are really and truly getting ready for His coming. Remember that, and all your lessons and work will be well done because they are done for JESUS CHRIST.

And, secondly, like Eve, we must be *looking for CHRIST*. We must not think only of this world, and what we shall do here, now and when we grow up. But we ought to be looking for CHRIST's coming and wishing for it—wishing for, longing for the time when He will come to take away all trouble and sin and death and take us into His own Home, a far brighter and better world than this. So in our prayers we ought to say very earnestly, "Thy Kingdom come," and pray that JESUS CHRIST will come soon.

And then, thirdly, like Eve, we must be *quite sure* that He will come.

GOD always keeps His word. As He said JESUS would come the first time and He came, so we are quite sure that He will come again though it seems a long time to wait. So when we are tired, and have some trouble or sorrow to bear, when we are tired of trying to be good and keeping from being bad, we can look up to Heaven and be sure that it will not be very long, and that JESUS is certain to come. Don't you think that this will make you brave and earnest, and will help you to do your best to be good and obedient, and

to pray that you may be ready when JESUS comes again?

Now let us see how Advent may really help us. It is to help us to be ready for Christmas. Now if we knew that JESUS CHRIST was really coming on next Christmas Day, and that we should see Him, how well we should keep Advent that we might be ready! Well, let us keep it so; for perhaps He may come then. And besides, to some of you children He will come in your Christmas Communion. Advent must help you to prepare for this, that your Christmas Communion may be the best you ever made, a real coming of CHRIST into your hearts.

How will you keep Advent? You might try and keep it by being very good. Don't be disobedient. Don't say one bad word. Don't leave anything undone. Don't do any bad thing from now until Christmas Day.

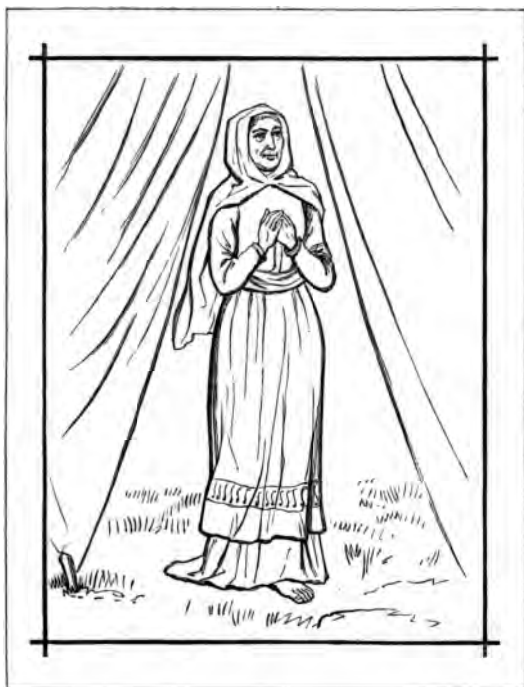
And you might come to Church more. Be sure to come once on each Sunday besides coming to Sunday school. Perhaps some of you could come on some week-days too.

And if you have time, you might say a little prayer. Suppose that besides your morning and evening prayers you were to try and say a short prayer in the middle of the day. I know some children who say the Collect for the First Sunday in Advent. It is not very long, and you could *easily* learn it from your Prayer Books.

At any rate, let us all try to do something to keep Advent.

Let us work for JESUS. Let us be always looking for JESUS. Let us pray to JESUS. Then we may be quite sure we shall be ready for Him when He comes again.

Will you not try?



SARAH—A MOTHER OF OUR LORD.

Gen. xviii. 9-14.

The Second Sunday in Advent.

SARAH—A MOTHER OF OUR LORD.

GENESIS xviii. 1-14.

LAST Sunday we thought about Eve, the first mother of our Lord JESUS CHRIST. We saw how she looked forward to and longed for His coming. And we tried to learn from her how to look forward and be ready for JESUS CHRIST when He comes again.

We tried to see how we might keep Advent, so that it might help us to be ready. I hope that we have been keeping it in some way during this first week. Have you?

Now let us think about another mother of our Lord.

Eve died without seeing the promised Saviour. She saw the world growing worse and worse, but He did not come Who would give life. After her, too, many others were born and died. Some of them looked and longed for the Saviour, and some thought and cared nothing at all about Him.

When about two thousand years had passed away GOD came to a man called Abraham, who had a wife called SARAH. They were very good people, and had given up a great deal that they

might serve GOD. They were among those who were longing for the coming of the "Seed of the woman," Who should overcome Satan and give them Life. But there was one thing that troubled them. They were very old, and yet they had no children. Indeed, they had got so old that it seemed impossible they ever should have any, and they were very sad to think that Sarah could never be a "mother of JESUS CHRIST."

But one day when Abraham was sitting in the door of his tent GOD came to him. Abraham had no house. He had given that up because GOD told him, and lived in a tent, travelling from place to place wherever GOD wished him to go. So GOD came to him and talked with him. Abraham had obeyed GOD in all things, and now GOD rewarded him, and gave him a great promise. And the promise was that Sarah should have a son. Many years before GOD had said the same, but the time of waiting had been very long. Now the time was come, and in the very next year the child should be born. Don't you think Abraham was glad?

When GOD said this, Sarah was standing behind Abraham in the door of the tent, as we see her in the picture, and she heard it. How wonderful it was! It seemed too good to be true. And so she laughed. She could not believe it.

But GOD heard her laugh, and said that she ought not to do that. "Is anything too hard for *the Lord?*" and then He repeated the promise. *Sarah was afraid* when she found that GOD knew

she had laughed, but oh, how happy she was! We can think of her as we see her here. She seems to have a smile still on her face. She has folded her hands on her breast, and is looking up to heaven in rapture. Oh, how wonderful! Oh, how joyful! And it *must* be true, because God has said it!

Yes, and it was true. The next year the child was born, and Abraham and Sarah rejoiced at his birth. How glad they were! And they called his name ISAAC, which means "laughter," because God had made them laugh for joy.

Now I think the great lesson we are all to learn from this is that there is nothing too hard for God. When God makes a promise He will keep it, because He always speaks truth. And He *can* keep it, because no one can prevent Him, and there is nothing He cannot do. When we make promises they are, as we say, *conditional*; we will keep them if we can. If we are well, if we have the money or the time, above all, if it is God's will, we will do as we have said. But this is not so with God. He never promises what He cannot do, and whatever He promises He is able and is sure to perform.

Let us see how this helps us.

Last Sunday we determined to keep Advent. We determined to try to be good that we might be like JESUS CHRIST, and be ready for Him when He comes again. But how hard it is to be good! So *hard that sometimes it seems impossible.*

Sometimes a boy or girl wants to be good, really means with all his or her heart to get ready for JESUS when He comes. But there are so many temptations. Bad boys and girls round about them make them bad. Perhaps they have got into such bad habits that it seems as if they could never give them up. Perhaps they have really a bad temper, some bad disposition born with them, which they seem not to be able to overcome. Perhaps their parents did not teach them well, or correct their faults, when they were very little. All this makes it so hard to be good now.

And another thing perhaps makes it harder than all. Grown-up people say such dreadfully unkind things. They say that there is no good in Tom ; that Jane is so bad that it is of no use her trying to be good. Perhaps they laugh at the children, saying that they don't believe they mean to try, that they know it will only last a few days.

Now it is very wrong indeed of grown-up people to say such things. They don't think of what they are doing, but they often discourage children and prevent them from trying to be good and to please JESUS CHRIST. Mind, children, that you never say such things about others, not now nor when you grow up. Help others all you can, but never tell them it is of no use trying. Do not believe them when you hear them.

And, children, you must never think such things about yourselves. Never think or say that you *cannot be good*. *You can, if you really want to.*

It is quite true that you can't of yourselves, but

then remember, "Is anything too hard for the Lord?" Do you really think that you are so bad that GOD cannot make you good? No, of course not. GOD *can* make you good if you wish it, if you will ask Him, and if you will try yourselves.

Perhaps this seems too good to be true. Oh, if I only could get over my temper! If I only could learn to be obedient! If I could never say a bad word again! If I could break off that bad habit which perhaps no one knows of but myself! Oh, how glad I should be! Can GOD really help me? Can He really make me as good, and true, and pure as JESUS CHRIST?

My child, He can. JESUS CHRIST came into the world for you. "He died to make you good," as you often sing. You know what your Catechism teaches you. You were made in Baptism a "member of CHRIST, a child of GOD, and an inheritor of the kingdom of Heaven." Now what does this really mean? It means that by making you His child and a member of CHRIST, GOD has given to you that very life which Adam and Eve lost when they sinned, and which Abraham and Sarah, and all the good people about whom we read in the Old Testament, were always longing for. Now, do you think GOD cannot, or will not, help one to whom He has given His own Life? Do you think GOD cannot, or will not, help His own child? That JESUS CHRIST cannot, or will not, care for His own members? Of course He *cares for them, and will help them.*

And more than this. Besides receiving God's Life when you were baptized, many of you have been confirmed. By the Laying on of the Hands of the Bishop you have received the sevenfold gift of the Holy Ghost to make you strong. And some of you perhaps have received God's gift of absolution in His Church. Some of the older ones have received the Blessed Sacrament of the Body and Blood of CHRIST.

In all these ways GOD cherishes and strengthens His life in you, and so helps you to be good.

Well, then, never give up trying; never think it is of no use. Never think that while others can grow better you must always remain bad. It is true you cannot of yourselves please GOD, but there is "nothing too hard for the Lord." He can make you good now, and by the life of the Holy Spirit He has given to you He can make you better and better, that you may be quite ready for JESUS CHRIST when He comes again. This ought to make us laugh for joy, and not give up in despair. Try, then, with all your hearts. God's life is in you, GOD is helping. Oh, what a joy it will be when JESUS comes and is able Himself to rejoice with us because He finds us looking for Him, longing for Him, and more than all, ready to meet Him !



RUTH—A MOTHER OF OUR LORD.

Ruth i. 16-18.

Third Sunday in Advent.

RUTH—A MOTHER OF OUR LORD.

RUTH i. 16-19.

ON this Third Sunday in Advent we will try to think of another "mother of our Lord." There were a great many women born after Sarah who all come in as mothers of our Lord, and many of them very good and well worth thinking about. We have not time now to think of them all, so we will take one who lived about five hundred years after Sarah, one of whom we do not think so much as we ought.

We read in the Bible that there was a famine in the land of Canaan, a time when the crops failed and people could get no bread to eat. At that time there was living there a Jew called Elimelech, who had a wife called Naomi and two sons. When there was nothing to eat he took his family and went into the land of Moab. They stayed in that land ten years. In that time the two sons grew up and were married. While they stayed there Elimelech died, and after him both his sons, so that Naomi and her daughters-in-law were all *three left widows*. Poor women, how sad they *must have been!* I think we must pity Naomi

very much. Think of her losses. First her husband, then her two sons, and so she was left in a strange land with only two daughters-in-law, and they belonging to a strange nation. And they had no children, so that it seemed as if all her family were dying out.

When she found herself left so alone she determined to go back to her own country. At first when she set out, the two daughters-in-law, the widows of her sons, said they would go back with her. But she told them it was better that they should stay among their own people ; that they had been very good to their husbands ; but that they were still young, and perhaps if they stayed where they were known they would marry again, and be at rest and happy.

One of them, whose name was Orpah, when she heard this, thought that Naomi was right, and it was better to stay there than go into a strange country. So, though she was very sorry to leave her mother-in-law, she bid her good-bye, kissed her, and went back to her own family and friends.

The other one, whose name was RUTH, said, No, she would not leave Naomi. She would go with her wherever she went. She would give up her own people, her own country, and her own gods, and take all those of Naomi for her own. Will you notice her exact words: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for *whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my GOD: where thou diest, will I die, and*

there will I be buried : the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

Now look at the picture. It is a picture of Ruth. She has made up her mind, and has spoken these words, and she will not stop to hear more. She turns towards Bethlehem where they are going, gathers up her dress around her, and presses on. How earnest and eager she seems ! She thinks no more of what she is leaving ; she has bidden her sister good-bye ; and now her only thought is to give up everything else and press on quickly to the land to which GOD is calling her.

When Naomi saw that Ruth had made up her mind she did not try to persuade her to return any more, but went on with her ; and indeed she must have been very glad to have her. So they went together to Bethlehem.

Now I told you to notice Ruth's exact words. We must do this, because I think they show us what it really was that made her so ready and earnest in giving up all. She said, "Thy people shall be my people, *and Thy GOD my GOD.*" This, I think, was the secret. She had watched Naomi, and had seen that she was different from other people ; that she was, as we say, *good*. She knew that Naomi's GOD was different from her own. Naomi must have taught her something about Him. She felt that this GOD was true, while hers were only made of wood and stone. She saw that this GOD could keep His people from sin even *in a strange land*, could make them different from

all others, and then she felt she must know more about Him.

This, then, I think, is what her words meant. She was willing to give up all she had—her home, her friends, her kindred—and go with Naomi if only she could know more about Naomi's God, if she could become like her; yes, she would gladly give up all if only she could be really *good*.

Was it not a grand thing for her to do? See how she is pressing on! How she seems to say, "All for God and for His land; when shall I come to appear before the Presence of God?" It was grand. Would not you wish to be like her?

And what happened to her? This: God watched over her, and took her for one of His own people. She was taught the true religion, and how to worship the God she longed to know. And then God provided her a good husband. She was the great-grandmother of King David; and so as you know that our Lord in His human nature was the Son of David, she was one of the mothers of our Lord. This poor heathen woman, because she willingly gave up all for God, was brought by Him to this great honour—she was a mother of JESUS CHRIST.

Now, children, you will not find it hard to see what this good Ruth teaches us.

You wish to be good; some of you are trying *very hard* to be good. Ruth teaches you that if *you really* want to be good you must give up *something for God*.

You know there are some now whom GOD calls to give up everything for Him. You know something of what the life of Sisters of Mercy is. GOD calls them to leave their own family and friends, and perhaps their own country, as Ruth did, to leave all they have in the world and to put themselves under a Mistress of Novices, as Ruth put herself under Naomi, that they may be trained by her and taught to serve GOD and to give themselves wholly to Him. They give all they have, and all that they are ever likely to have, that GOD may be their GOD, saying, like Ruth, "This GOD is our GOD for ever and ever ; He shall be our Guide unto death."

Perhaps GOD may call some of you girls—yes, and boys too—to such a life as this. Would not you be glad if He did ?

But whether He does so or not, He does tell us that if any of us really want to be *good* we must be ready and must give up a great deal for Him. We must give up a great many things we like, a great many things which are perhaps good for us to have, and, chief of all, we must give up our own will.

Perhaps you will want to ask me how you are to do this. You cannot leave home. Some of you are very poor, and have not much you can give up. What can you do ? I will tell you.

Suppose we went into a family, and found them all something like this. No one spoke gently to another, but all were inclined to be snappish and ill-tempered. The children were continually quarrelling. Everybody wanted the same thing.

All wanted the same toy at the same time; perhaps they tried to snatch it from each other. If there was something especially nice on the table, each one wanted to be helped first. If one was wanted to run an errand, each had some excuse. No one wanted to help mother to mind the baby. No one cared to be useful to the others. Now if we saw such a family, without wishing to judge them hardly, what should we say? I think we could not help saying, or at least thinking, "These children are not trying to be *good*. They cannot really wish to be good. They do not give up anything to be good. This family has not said, 'God shall be my God.'"

But if we went into another house and found all very different. Every one ready to jump up at once to wait on mother, or to do a kindness for brother or sister. Father never having to ask twice for anything he needed. Baby always taken up and nursed or rocked. When anything nice is before them each wishing the other to have it, or at least to have an equal share. No snappish words, no unkindness. What should we say of such a family? Don't you think you would say, "I know now what it is to give up for God. I know now what it is to be really trying to be *good*"?

Yes, children, if we would really be *good*, really live as God's children, really be ready for JESUS CHRIST when He comes, we must not only look for Him and long for Him, not only pray that we may be like Him, but we must try to be like

Him now. When JESUS CHRIST first came He was never selfish, He never thought of Himself at all. He thought, first, how could He do the Will of His Father in Heaven ; and second, how could He do some good or kindness to those round about Him.

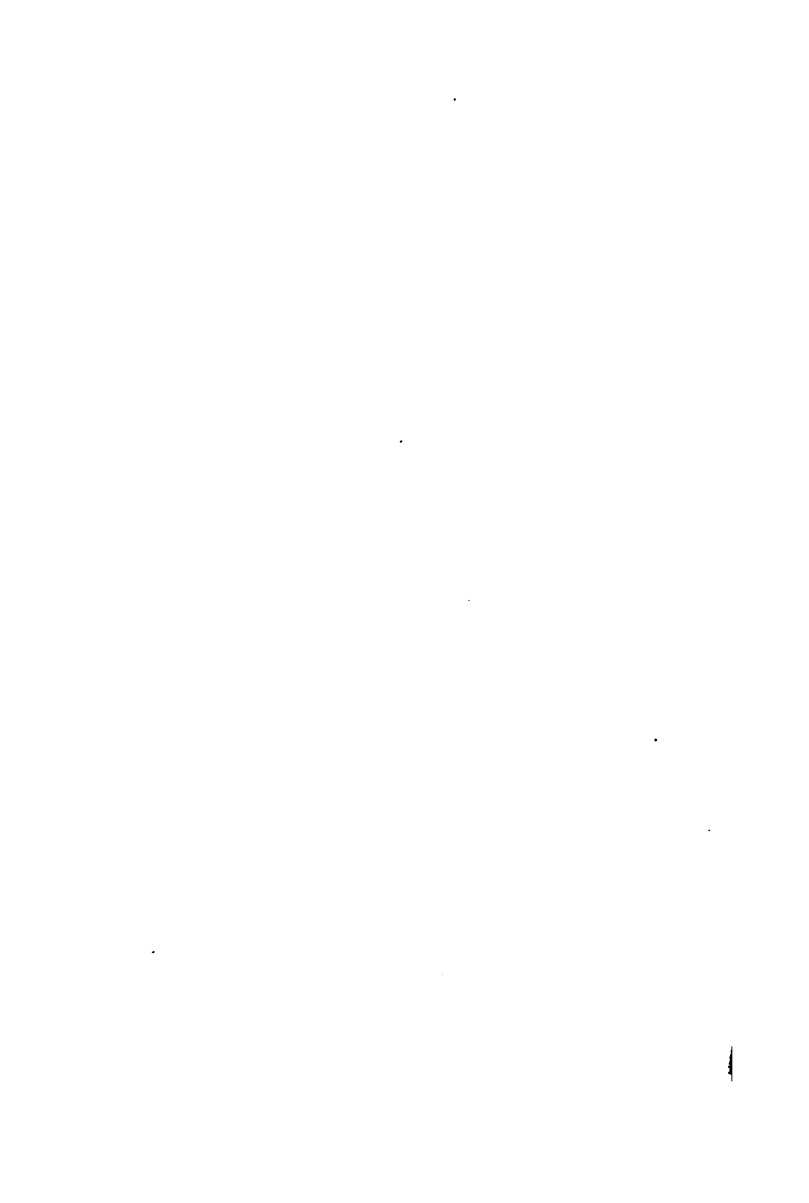
Try, then, to keep Advent by giving up something for the sake of JESUS CHRIST.

I think our picture may give a special lesson to some of you. There are seven sheaves of corn before Ruth. Some of you will very soon be confirmed, that you may receive the sevenfold Gift of the Holy Spirit. Think what you must give up that you may rightly receive that wonderful Gift. The Gift you are to receive is far greater than Ruth expected. Do not let her put you to shame !

Again think, Where was Ruth going? To Bethlehem, and Bethlehem means the "House of Bread." There JESUS CHRIST was afterwards born. A good place for the birth of Him Who is called the "Bread of Life." And we too have a Bethlehem, a House of Bread, to which a great many of us are coming early on Christmas morning. You know what that is? Our dear Church, where CHRIST's altar is. We are coming there that we may not only worship our Lord on His Birthday, but that He Himself may feed us with the Bread of Life. No more wandering away ; no more hunger ; no more famine. We have a Heavenly Food. We come to feed upon *the Body and Blood of JESUS CHRIST, Who is the*

Living Bread that cometh down from Heaven to give Life unto the world.

Children, is there anything too great to give up, if giving it up will help us better to receive this Holy Bread, and so to be more ready to meet JESUS CHRIST when He comes again into the world?





MARY—THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD.

S. Luke i. 46.

The fourth Sunday in Advent.

THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY—THE MOTHER OF OUR LORD.

S. LUKE i. 46-55.

WE are coming very near the end of Advent. What has it taught us? JESUS CHRIST came into the world at Christmas eighteen hundred and eighty years ago, and we are preparing to keep His Birthday joyfully. And JESUS CHRIST is coming again, and we are trying now in Advent, and afterwards all through our lives, to live like Him, so that we may be good and ready to meet Him when He comes.

Think now of your Advent lessons. Eve has taught us to be expecting, longing for the coming of JESUS CHRIST, and to be trying to be good for Him. Sarah has taught us that we can be good, for that if we ask Him, GOD will make us good; He has promised to do so, and there is "nothing too hard for the Lord." Ruth has taught us self-denial; that we must be ready to give up a great deal, and especially our own will and way, if we would be what JESUS wishes to find us when He comes.

To-day we are to think of the Mother of our Lord Himself—the very Mother of whom He

was born. All the others looked for Him, longed for Him, tried to be worthy of Him, but she *saw* Him, for He was her very own Son. Well might she be glad, and sing, "My soul doth magnify the Lord."

We ought to think a great deal of the BLESSED VIRGIN MARY. We see gathered up in her all that we have learned from those mothers who went before her, and she teaches us a great deal besides. Like Eve, the Blessed Virgin was looking for and longing for the coming of JESUS CHRIST, and as the time was near that CHRIST should be born she must have longed all the more. She saw the world full of sin around her, and, as it seemed, getting worse every day. She saw her own family and people in great sorrow and trouble, and wished that a Saviour would come for them, and so she gave herself up to pray for His coming.

She was like Sarah too. GOD sent an angel to tell her she should have a Son. When she heard this, it seemed so wonderful, almost too good to be true, and she asked, "How shall this be?" And the angel said nearly the same words that GOD said to Sarah, "With GOD nothing shall be impossible." You will find the whole story in the first chapter of S. Luke's Gospel.

And then she was like Ruth. You remember how Ruth gave up everything for GOD, and how GOD calls every one to give up something for Him, *especially* Sisters of Mercy, who give up all. Now *we believe* that the Blessed Virgin Mary when

quite a girl gave herself up to GOD very much in the same way that Sisters do now. She determined never to marry, never to have a family, never to have much in this world, but to give herself to GOD. She wished to spend all her life in His service, in praying for the Saviour's coming, in praying for forgiveness for the sins of her people, and in doing such work as GOD gave her to do.

One thing which you will read in S. Luke's Gospel I must explain. It is said that Mary was betrothed to a man called Joseph. In our days this would mean that Mary would in time become the wife of Joseph and the mother of his children, but it did not always mean so then. Mary was only betrothed to him that she might have a protector. She was but a young girl, and could not live alone, so he was to be her friend and guardian, to see that none hindered her in giving herself to GOD.

She gave herself up to GOD. But she did more even than this. When GOD's message came that she should have a Son, it changed her life; and besides, she knew that this would cause her a great deal of pain and sorrow, as bad as a sword piercing her soul. Yet she yielded to GOD's Will. She gave up her own plans; she went wherever GOD willed, and suffered all that it was necessary she should suffer, saying only one thing, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to Thy Word."

So in GOD's time her Son was born, JESUS

CHRIST the Saviour of the world, Whom all the world had been looking for for four thousand years, ever since GOD said, "The Seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

When people have been longing for some good thing, how glad they are when it comes! And the greater the thing is, the more glad they are! How glad, then, must Mary have been when she found that He Whom all good women from Eve downward had been longing for had really come, and that He was to be born of her! It was no wonder that she burst into singing. People can't help singing when they are glad. I once knew a little girl who used to sing nearly all day. I asked her why she sang so much, and if she did not get tired? "Tired? Oh, no! I never get tired of singing. I can't help it, I am so happy. GOD is so good, and everybody is so good to me."

And so it was with the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was so glad that she lifted up her hands to GOD and poured out a beautiful song of praise, "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in GOD my Saviour."

Will you get your Bible and read the whole of this song? It is written in the first chapter of S. Luke's Gospel, from the forty-sixth to the fifty-fifth verses.

English children can find it too in their *Prayer Books*. It is put there for them to sing every evening that you go to Church. The song was *thought* so beautiful that for many many hundred

years it was sung to the praise of GOD and of His Son JESUS CHRIST every day all over the world. About one hundred years ago it was left out of the Prayer Book of the American Church ; but American Churchmen are very sorry, and they mean to put it back again very soon, and then all the Christian world will sing "Magnificat, or the Song of the Blessed Virgin Mary."

The Blessed Virgin never thought that her song would live on like this. She only wanted to pour out her heart to GOD. GOD heard her, and gave her words to sing, and helped her so that in all these years Christians have never found any more beautiful words in which to praise GOD.

Does not she teach us a lesson of praise ? When we have wanted something very much and at last it has come, how very often we forget to thank GOD !

Ah, children ! don't be ungrateful, don't forget Who it is that helps you. When you have been able to do what is right ; when you have been obedient ; when you have done your lessons well ; when you have been able to give up something for GOD ; when you have kept a good Advent or Lent, don't forget Who has helped you ! Sing the praise of GOD. Lift up your hearts to Him. Be sure that your praises will not be lost. Long after you are dead those praises will still be ringing on in the Presence of GOD.

Now will you let me teach you a little about how Church children can praise GOD ?

You know that you are preparing for your Christmas Communion. You have been taught a great many things about the Holy Communion. Will you think of it now as your best way of praising God?

One of the names of the Holy Communion is "Holy Eucharist." This means "Thanksgiving," or "Sacrifice of Thanksgiving," as the Prayer Book calls it. Yes, the Holy Eucharist is our best way of praising God. Our Lord JESUS CHRIST has gone into Heaven to offer Himself there for us before God. In the Holy Eucharist He gives Himself to His people under the form of Bread and Wine, that we, receiving Him, may join in His heavenly offering of Himself to the glory and praise of God.

Here, then, is something grand for you to think of, something grand for you to do! Look back over your lives and see how good God has been to you. You have been baptized and made God's children; you have, many of you, been confirmed and received the Holy Ghost; you have been absolved from sin; and for all this you want to praise God. Oh, how grateful you should be! And besides, you know how God has helped you to overcome your faults. He has helped you to be really sorry for your sins, and then to put them away. He has made you more truthful, obedient, pure, gentle, kind, self-denying, and now He has helped you to keep *Advent well* and to try to get ready for the coming of JESUS CHRIST.

How can you show your thankfulness? Come

to your Communion early on Christmas morning, and take your part in offering the great Sacrifice of Thanksgiving; join with "Angels and Archangels and all the company of Heaven to laud and magnify God's glorious Name" for all the great things He has done for you.

But when you do this you must praise Him, even as the Blessed Virgin did, for the greatest thing of all, that from which all other blessings come, that which Christmas Day tells us of—the coming of JESUS CHRIST into the world.

All may do this, whether they have been confirmed or not; but do not let any who have been confirmed let Christmas Day pass without their offering their Eucharist and receiving their Christmas Communion. Sunday school is good, and it will be good to come and sing our Christmas carols to our Infant Saviour, and to come in the evening and sing "Magnificat;" but our carols will go up the more brightly if they go up from lips which have in the morning offered their Eucharist and sung, "Glory be to GOD on high." And our "Magnificat" will go up more lovingly and earnestly if it goes up from hearts in which on His own Birthday morning JESUS CHRIST has come to dwell.



THE HOLY CHILD JESUS.

S. Luke ii. 16.

Christmas Day, or the Sunday after Christmas.

THE HOLY CHILD JESUS.

S. LUKE ii. 15, 16.

IT IS CHRISTMAS DAY, and all the world is full of joy. If there are any who ought to be happy, to be full of joy to-day, certainly they are the children of the Church who have kept Advent well, and have been trying to prepare themselves to keep Christmas Day as the Birthday of their Lord. So we must try to have a happy day.

But if we are to have a happy day, where shall we spend it? I think you would all say at once, "Let us go even unto Bethlehem." We could not go to a better place. Let us try.

But how shall we go while we are all sitting here in the Church? I think we can go in this way. We can go, as we say, *in spirit*, though not *in body*. Do you understand what I mean? Sometimes boys or girls are sitting in school, their bodies are there, but their minds and thoughts are elsewhere. They are thinking about home, or some amusement, perhaps about some trouble, so that while *in the body* they are at school *in the spirit* they are somewhere else. I am afraid teachers very often wish that children would be in spirit where they are in body! And it is just the same

with grown-up people ; they often try to be in spirit, where they cannot be in body.

Let us, then, try to forget where we are—the Church, the Sunday school ; let us shut our eyes to all these things and go in spirit to Bethlehem. And we can really do this, because GOD the Holy Spirit will help us if we ask Him, just as He helps grown-up people when they want to meditate. Besides this, all that was done in Bethlehem has never passed away ; it is eternal, and is all as real for us as it was for those who went to Bethlehem eighteen hundred and eighty years ago.

“Let us now go even unto Bethlehem.” But we are not the first who have been there to-day. Very early, long before we were awake this morning, the blessed angels were there. They came to see One for Whom they had been looking, oh, so long ! And when they saw Him they lifted up their voices, being full of joy, and sang a glorious hymn, “Glory to GOD on high, on earth peace, goodwill towards men.”

And they did not keep their joy to themselves, but told us. They flew swiftly away to the fields where the sheep and lambs were folded for the night as they rested on their journey to Jerusalem, where they would be offered for sacrifices. There they found the shepherds and told them that the One they and all good people were looking for was *come* ; that the Seed of the woman Whom Eve and *Sarah and Ruth* and many others longed for was

come ; that this day there was born "a Saviour, CHRIST the Lord."

When the shepherds heard this they left their flocks and went to Bethlehem to see. And when they had seen they went back, and they too told all that they met. So the good news was handed on from one to another until at last it has come to us, and we say to-day, "Let us go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us." (1.)*

What do we see when we have come? There is a large dark cave cut in the side of the rocky hill just at the back of the inn. The cave is used as a stable, and there is an ox and an ass tied up there now. At the door of the cave is an old man. His name is Joseph, and he is the good man whom GOD chose to take care of the Blessed Virgin and her Holy Child. Joseph opens and lets us in. There, in the cave, between the ox and ass, we see the Blessed Virgin herself kneeling upon the ground. Why does she kneel? Who is that before her? Now we see Him. In a hole in the ground, used as a manger for the cattle to feed out of, laid on a little straw, we see a Child, a little Babe, born this morning. Oh, what a beautiful Babe He is! And this is He Whom all the world has been longing to see. This is the Saviour.

* If these addresses are read to children, it will be well if possible that they should sing a carol at each of these numerals.

This is JESUS CHRIST. See how He smiles upon us. See how He raises His little arms, and lifts them up as if He were stretching them out to welcome us, almost as if He were asking us to take Him up and fold Him to our hearts. Oh, how glad we should be to do so, for indeed we love Him! We cannot help loving Him, He is so good, so innocent, and He seems glad to see us, and calls us to Himself. Besides, we know He loves us, and that it is for our sakes that He lies there a little Babe in a manger. Let us gather round Him, and with our eyes fixed on Him, and our hearts full of love, sing our Christmas carol. (2.)

But why does His mother kneel before Him? Mothers do not generally kneel before their children. Why does Joseph kneel down? Why is it that as we gaze on Him we feel that we must kneel too and worship Him? Who is He?

THE SON OF GOD! Yes, indeed He is. He is the Child of Mary, but He has no human father. When the angel came to His Blessed Mother he said, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that Holy Thing Which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." He is indeed of our nature, born of a human mother, but by the mystery of the Incarnation He is also GOD. *The mystery of the Incarnation is that GOD the Son, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity, was made Man.*

We may not be able to understand this, but that does not matter. We need not understand ; we need only believe that He Who is before us in the manger is both God and Man, the Child of Mary and the Son of God.

If He is this, we must take heed how we come before Him to sing our carols. We must come with great care and great reverence, for we are in the Presence of God. We must not come only to look at Him, nor only to sing to Him, but we must come to *worship* Him. So on this Christmas Day let us with all our hearts worship JESUS CHRIST the children's Saviour, the children's God. (3.)

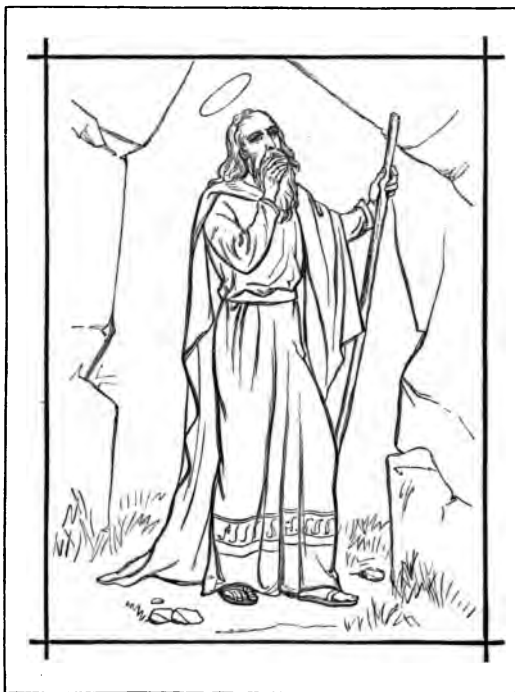
JESUS CHRIST is GOD ! This ought to make us very joyful. There is nothing too hard for the Lord. He can do all things. He can save me, He can make me good. O JESUS, my Saviour and my GOD, take my heart and all that I have and make me good, make me like Thyself, make me Thine !

To remember that JESUS is GOD will help us very much in singing our carols and in praising and worshipping Him. Because He is GOD He knows all things. As He lies there in the manger He looks on and on eighteen hundred years, and sees what is going on to-day. He sees all the children who are keeping His Birthday. He sees us here in Church to-day. He hears our carols and knows why we are singing them. O children, think how good it is to be able to give JESUS CHRIST pleasure ! We cannot tell the joy He feels when His children love

and worship Him, and try to give themselves to Him.

JESUS came into the world to suffer and to die. He knew all this from the moment He came, and we are told that He endured it all for the joy set before Him. I am sure that it was a part of His joy to see in all parts of the world, after His work was done and His suffering over, Christian children who have been redeemed by Him, who love Him for what He has done, and who take delight in worshipping Him and singing His praises, and giving glory to GOD the Father, Who sent Him into the world.

If you always thought of this you would never say a bad word, or do a bad thing, or if you could help it, think a bad thought. For JESUS CHRIST the Babe of Bethlehem sees and hears these things as well as He hears our praises, and they give Him pain. You would not wish to give pain to your Saviour. No indeed! Then let us resolve that for His sake we will keep from sin; that for His sake we will try to be good, not only through Advent, but through all the year. And let every one try to do some kind act, some work of love for His sake, that they may all give joy to JESUS CHRIST the BABE OF BETHLEHEM, the children's SAVIOUR, the children's GOD, and the children's KING.



JOSEPH, THE FAITHFUL STEWARD.

S. Luke i. 27.

Second Sunday after Christmas.

JOSEPH—THE FAITHFUL STEWARD.

S. LUKE ii. 4-16.

WHILE we are keeping our Christmas with great joy, and are thinking about our Blessed Lord and His holy Mother, we must not forget another who was present on the first Christmas Day, and who had a great share in all that was done then. We often hear another name joined with that of the Blessed Virgin Mary—the name of JOSEPH. He was with the Blessed Virgin when she went to Bethlehem. He was there when CHRIST was born. He took care of her and of her Divine Son. He went with them wherever they went, and seems to have watched over them with the greatest care and affection. Who was he? Why did he do this?

Let us see. Joseph was not the father of JESUS CHRIST, though he is sometimes called by that name. JESUS CHRIST had no earthly father. He was born by the power of the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary. He was the Son of Mary and the Son of GOD. So Joseph could not be His father. What was he, then?

The Blessed Virgin Mary, as I have told you before, wished when she was quite young to give herself up to GOD. She did not wish to have a

husband to care for her. She was willing to leave herself in the care of GOD. But it would not have been right for a young girl to live and grow up all alone ; people might have said unkind things about her, and perhaps have tried to injure her. So Joseph was chosen by GOD to be her protector, and she was betrothed to him that no one else might have any right to interfere with her. She was never *married* to him, as we say now ; she never had any children that were his children ; she was only betrothed to him that he might take care of her, as some good father might take care of a young daughter.

And Joseph took good care of Mary, and when her Child JESUS was born he took care of Him too. Some people thought that he was the father of JESUS because they did not know, or did not believe the Incarnation—that JESUS was the Son of God, Who had become Man. But he was not this, but only a kind of foster-father, to take care of Him. It was because he took such care of Him, as if He were his own child, and because he was betrothed to His Blessed Mother, that he is sometimes called the father of JESUS.

Now what do we call one who is put in charge of other persons, or who is given the care of other peoples' property ? We call him a guardian, and sometimes a steward, do we not ? I think the *best name* for S. Joseph is *steward*, because it *suits best the work* he had to do, and is the word *we find in the Bible* for those who had such work

to do as his. We read in the Book of Genesis of Eliezer, the steward of Abraham's house, who watched over his corn and his property. I think if we were asked, "Who is that faithful and wise steward whom his Lord shall make ruler over His household, to give them their portion of meat in due season?" we should all answer at once, "It is Joseph, who took care of the Blessed Virgin and her Holy Child JESUS," and we should be right.

What kind of a steward did Joseph make? S. Paul says that "it is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." Was Joseph faithful? Let us think more about him.

He certainly was very *obedient*. When GOD told him to take Mary to be his espoused wife he took her at once. When he was told to go to Bethlehem he went. When he was told to take the young Child and His mother and flee into Egypt he rose up in the night and started at once upon the journey. When GOD called him he came back to Nazareth. We know that he was obedient in going up to Jerusalem to keep the feasts GOD commanded, and that when the time came for JESUS to go up at twelve years old he took Him with him. He was obedient.

What a good example Joseph sets to children, teaching them how to please GOD! He teaches us of what kind our obedience must be. It must be ready, *doing* at once what we are told, and not *questioning* as to why this or that should be

ordered. It must be perfect, not leaving half undone and doing just the things we like, but doing all, and doing it thoroughly.

Besides being obedient Joseph was very *faithful*. Of that we may be quite sure. He felt that the charge he had received was from GOD, and it must be fulfilled for GOD. How anxious he must have been to do all well! How faithfully he watched over the Blessed Virgin Mary before JESUS was born, and especially on the way to Jerusalem! How sad it must have made him that he could provide no better lodging for her than a stable! He had tried, but Bethlehem was very full, and there was no room for them in the inn, and no one could be found who would take them into their house.

How carefully he must have guarded the stable door, letting no stranger in, and questioning carefully the shepherds who came to worship before he would admit even them! In our picture I think we see him standing thus to guard the door. He is an old man, yet he stands there brave and upright, holding in his hand his staff. He seems, too, to be pondering over all the strange things that have happened. He looks anxious, and perhaps he is looking upward and asking GOD to teach him and help him to do his duty.

How faithfully he watched over the mother and *Child* on their journey through the wilderness and *all the time* they were in the land of Egypt! We *never read* that he left them and went off on his

own pleasure or business. I wonder if we are all as faithful. Suppose a girl or boy takes a little brother or sister to the fields to play, and then instead of playing with the little one goes off with some older ones. Perhaps the little one cries all alone, perhaps it falls into the pond and gets wet, perhaps some one comes along and hurts it. The older ones would be sorry then, but they have not been *faithful* to their charge as Joseph was.

And we may be sure that Joseph was faithful with the money intrusted to him. When some wise men came from the East to worship JESUS they gave Him rich gifts because they believed Him to be their King and their God. These Joseph must take care of. How well he would take care of them, how carefully he would spend the money, for he knew he was only a steward for GOD! Do you think we are all as careful? Do you think that we always remember that all the money we have comes from GOD, and must be spent for Him? Especially ought we to be faithful when money is intrusted to us to spend for some one else. Would it be right to take a little change out of it to spend for our own pleasure, to buy cakes or oranges with? It would be unfaithful. It would be stealing. How much worse it would be if we took money that we knew really did belong to GOD! Suppose father or mother gave a boy some money to put it in the bag at church when the offertory was collected, how *dreadful it would be* if he were to keep any of *it and spend it for himself!* It is not his, he

is only a steward to bring it from his parent to God. If he were to keep it, he would be robbing God. And God would see. It is a terrible thing to be unfaithful in the things of God !

I think Joseph may teach *parents* something as well as children. What care he took of the Child intrusted to him by God ! And all children are God's gift ; they are all intrusted to us by God. Especially if they have been baptized. Parents must not think children a trouble, and wish them out of the way. They can only please God as they are faithful in the care of the children God has given them. Indeed, all children are God's children, and parents must give an account to God whether or no they have been faithful stewards.

It is a lesson for all of us—parents, godparents, Sunday-school teachers, priests. We are all in some way God's stewards, and especially according to our opportunities we are intrusted with the care of God's children. Let us pray that we at the last be found to have been faithful.

This, then, is what Joseph teaches us, and for which he well deserves to be called *Saint Joseph—obedience and faithfulness*. He was obedient in accepting the charge God gave him, and both obedient and faithful in fulfilling it. Shall I tell you of a little girl who was, I think, a little like S. Joseph in being obedient and faithful ?

I have read that when there was the great fire in Chicago, when so much of the city and so many churches were burnt, as the fire was coming near

one of the churches the sexton ran in to see if he could save anything. He came out again bringing the vessels used for the Holy Communion. His little girl was there, and he gave them to her to hold, bidding her carry them safely and never let them go. They were heavy, and the fire was coming near, and she might have a long way to go ; but she only said, "Yes, father, I will," and took them. Her father went back to get something else, but before he could come out the fire came sweeping up, and the little girl had to run for her life. All the rest of that day and all that night she wandered in a strange part of the city, frightened, and oh ! so tired, but she never let go of her precious charge. Next day some one found her and took her to a little village near by. Three days afterwards her father found her there. He had got out of the church by another door, and had been searching everywhere, thinking she was burnt to death. And what do you think her first words were when she saw her father ? She ran to him and threw her arms round his neck, crying, "O father ! I am so glad, I have saved the Communion plate."

Was not she obedient and faithful ?



JESUS CHRIST RECEIVING THE WISE MEN.

S. Matt. ii. 11.

First Sunday after the Epiphany.

OUR LORD RECEIVING THE HOMAGE OF THE WISE MEN.

S. MATTHEW ii. 9-11.

WE must say to-day, as we said on Christmas Day,
“Let us go even unto Bethlehem.”

We have seen the Holy Child lying in the manger, His Blessed Mother kneeling by His side, and Joseph standing by to guard Him. We have seen the shepherds coming to worship Him, and we have heard the song of the angels. We have tried ourselves to worship Him also. Now we must see Him again receiving worship.

Some time after the shepherds had gone away, and when most of the people had left Bethlehem, so that S. Joseph was able to get a house for the Mother and the Holy Child JESUS, there came some wise men from a great distance to see our Lord. We do not know how long it was after, except that it was more than six weeks. Perhaps it was six months or a year. Nor do we know where these wise men came from, except that it was away far off in the East. We are not told much about them, *but from what we are told we think that they were men of high rank and position and very*

rich, most likely they were kings. And they were very learned men as well. They were something like King Solomon in this ; for we know that he was a great king, very rich, and the wisest man that ever lived.

These wise men, or kings, as we may call them, had studied a great deal about the stars. They knew them all by name, and watched them at different seasons of the year, and so learned a great deal from them. One day when they were looking up to the heavens they saw a strange sight. They said it was a star, but it was different from all stars they had ever seen. Perhaps it was like a comet, perhaps it was made by several stars coming together.

Now these wise men had read about Eve and Sarah, and they knew that JESUS CHRIST was coming, and that His coming was to be like a Star out of Jacob. When they saw this wonderful star standing over the land where the children of Jacob lived, they said that it must mean that the new King of the Jews, that is, JESUS CHRIST, was born ; that God had sent the star to tell them of it. What should they do ? They must go and see Him. So they prepared gifts, and gathered their servants and their camels and set out. It was a long journey, but they did not mind that, if only they could find JESUS.

They went first to Jerusalem, but JESUS was not there, and no one knew anything about Him except that the prophets had said He would be born in *Bethlehem*. They must have been surprised, and

perhaps disappointed, not to find the new King at Jerusalem, the royal city of King David, but they turned and went to Bethlehem. As soon as they were out of Jerusalem they saw the wonderful star again. GOD sent it to guide them to JESUS. So they came to the house where He was.

They rejoiced with great joy, and went in to see. There they found the Holy Child, not now in a manger, but on His Mother's knee; and when they saw Him they fell down and worshipped Him.

How glad JESUS must have been to see these faithful, earnest men! We can well think that, sitting on His Mother's knee, He stretched out His arms to welcome them, lifting up His right hand to bless them. He has a right to bless, for He is not only a King, but also "Bishop of our souls."

Do not you think these men deserved a blessing? And was it not worth while to take a long journey and go through many trials, if only at last they could see their Lord and receive His blessing? Indeed, children, it is worth a great deal to get such a reward. It is worth while living a long life, trying hard to be good, bearing many sorrows, and even persecution, if only at last we may hear Him say, "Well done, good and faithful servant," and see His arms stretched out to welcome us and His hand raised to bless us, His lips uttering those sweet words, "Enter into the joy of thy Lord."

We must think a little of how they worshipped Him. *They fell down*; that is, they went right

down upon their knees on the ground. This is the true way to worship. They *knelt down*. They did not sit down and look about them. They did not sit down and lean forward, and try to *look* as if they were kneeling, but they *knelt* on their *knees*. JESUS CHRIST would not have accepted their worship if they had not done so. He would have seen that they did not really love Him, but were only *pretending*. What do we call people who try to appear better than they are, who try to deceive men? We call them *hypocrites*. But they do not deceive GOD. He sees whether they are kneeling or not. He knows whether or not they really love Him, and wish to worship. Do not let us be hypocrites; but when we come to Church to worship JESUS CHRIST, or when we worship Him at home, let us be as these wise kings, let us fall down, let us go right down on our knees and worship. "Oh, come let us worship and fall down; let us kneel before the LORD our Maker."

The wise kings wished to do something more to show that they were sincere in worshipping JESUS. They opened the treasures they had brought with them and gave Him three gifts—gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

We too, when we come to worship, must offer JESUS gifts. These three gifts of the wise men will teach us what gifts we ought to bring.

They gave Him Gold, the most precious metal. *They gave Him* this because they believed that

though He looked so poor He was a King. Gold is the gift of kings to kings. JESUS is our King, and we must give Him the best we have. Do not forget when you come to Church to bring if you can a piece of money as your gift to your King.

But the gold may teach us more than this. When a man and woman are married the man gives the woman a golden ring. What does this mean? The ring, which has no beginning and no end, speaks of eternity, and the precious gold speaks of the most precious thing he has to give—his love. The golden ring tells of the eternal love which ought to bind man and wife together. • When we think, then, of a gift of gold we must think of the best we have to give to JESUS—the gift of our love. Surely, children, all that we have learned about our dear Saviour should make us say, “I will *love* Him with all my heart, and soul, and mind, and strength.”

The second gift of the wise kings was *Frankincense*, or, as we now say, incense. Incense is a powder made of the sweet-smelling gum of a tree. God commanded it to be offered before Him as a sacrifice, and it is still offered in most parts of the Christian Church. We will hope that some day it may be offered before Him according to His Will in every Church in our land. In Heaven they also offer incense, and this incense is called “The Prayers of the Saints.”

We see now why the wise men offered incense ; because they believed JESUS to be God.

And incense speaks of prayer and sacrifice

offered before GOD, and so it teaches us of worship. We must *worship* JESUS our GOD. It would be well, perhaps, if we thought a little more of this than we do. It is not enough to come to Church to hear sermons or to pray to GOD. It is not enough to come to Sunday school. We ought to come when there is no sermon, no Sunday school ; we ought to come to *worship*. Remember, then, that we go to Church to worship GOD, and we do not come before GOD rightly, either in His own House or anywhere else, unless we do come to *worship*.

The third gift was *Myrrh*. Myrrh is made of the bitter gum of a plant, and it was used at that time in preparing bodies to be buried. What a strange gift for them to offer JESUS ! This could not have been their own doing, for they did not know that JESUS was going to suffer and die. But GOD did. And so GOD put it into their hearts to make this offering. It was a kind of prophecy of the death of JESUS. And not only of His death, but of His Life of sorrow and bitterness, of all His self-denial and self-sacrifice.

We cannot give JESUS myrrh just like that which they gave, but we can give that which myrrh is a type of, we can deny ourselves for Him ; and if we have pain and suffering to bear we can bear them willingly, we can offer ourselves to JESUS to bear pain and sorrow for Him, even to die for Him if it is His Will.

Love, worship, and self-sacrifice, these shall be our three great gifts to JESUS CHRIST.



JESUS IN THE TEMPLE.

S. Luke ii. 48, 49.

Second Sunday after Epiphany.

OUR LORD JESUS AMONG THE DOCTORS IN THE TEMPLE.

S. LUKE ii. 46, 47.

WE must pass over twelve years of our Lord's life, during which He was taken by S. Joseph into Egypt and brought back again to His own land. All the rest of the time He lived at Nazareth with S. Joseph and His Blessed Mother.

We do not know much about His life at Nazareth; only one thing, that "He was subject unto them." That means that He was *obedient*. Perhaps this is the best thing we could know. There is not anything we could know much better about a young boy than that he obeyed his mother. Once, a long time ago, a choir-boy died suddenly. They had a beautiful funeral for him. First they went to Church, and then through the streets in procession to the cemetery singing hymns. The choir went first in their surplices, then the clergy, then the coffin, carried by four young men of the choir wearing their surplices. After the coffin came the friends, and then all the boys who had been at school with him. The clergyman wanted to say something to the boys as they stood round the grave, and he could find nothing better than this,

"His father had told me that John never disobeyed his mother." That little choir-boy was like JESUS CHRIST.

When JESUS was twelve years old it was time that He should go up to the Temple at Jerusalem to keep the Feast of the Passover, a great feast among the Jews, when all the men were obliged to be there. So JESUS went up with Joseph, and Mary went up too. She was not obliged to go, but she did not wish to be parted from her Son.

When they had kept the feast Joseph and Mary started to return home with a great many other people. They thought that JESUS was with the other boys who were there, and so they journeyed on all day. But at night when they rested they could not find Him. You can fancy how frightened and sorry they were. They looked for Him all that night, and the next day went back to Jerusalem seeking Him. At the end of three days they found Him in the Temple. If they had gone straight there they would have found Him sooner.

When they found Him they were very glad. But His Mother asked Him why He had done so, why He had stayed behind and given them so much sorrow and trouble? You see He had always been obedient, and had never done anything like this before, and she could not understand it. His answer explains it, "How is it that ye sought Me? *wist ye not* "[did ye not know]" that I must be about *My Father's business?*" Perhaps His words mean.

“ Did ye not know that I must be in My Father’s house ? ”

This was the reason. He had always obeyed her as His Mother, but now His Heavenly Father had given Him some work to do, and that work was in His Father’s house, so that He had been obliged to leave her that He might do God’s Will. So it must always be with good children. They will obey their parents ; but if ever God’s Will needs that they should do something different from what their parents wish, they will not be wrong in leaving their parents to obey God.

But what had JESUS been doing in the Temple ? He has been at school. Or perhaps it would be better to say He was at the *Catechising*.

On some of the lesser days of the feast, for the Feast of the Passover spread over a whole week, some of the learned men, who were called “ Doctors of the Law ” because they taught God’s Law—something like what we call “ Doctors of Divinity ” now—some of these learned men had public catechisings in the court, or in one of the rooms of the Temple. Any one might go and hear, and any one might ask questions. JESUS CHRIST went to the Catechising, and there His Mother and S. Joseph found Him, “ in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions.”

We see Him in the picture. How earnest and thoughtful He looks ! He has been sitting intently watching and listening to the doctors, but now that His Mother has come He has risen up, and

stands quietly and respectfully with folded hands listening to what she will say. It was no wonder that she was surprised.

All the people who were there and heard Him were astonished at His understanding and answers. Well they might be, for they did not know Who He was. *We* know that He was the Son of GOD, and that He speaks of GOD and of the things of GOD. He is called the WORD of GOD. It was not strange that He should speak so well.

But though He knew all things much better than those who were teaching, He did not say so. He knew what it was to "order Himself lowly and reverently to all His betters, and to submit Himself to His governors, teachers, spiritual pastors, and masters." He had been obedient and respectful to His Mother, and now He was the same to these learned and aged men. Sometimes when children are told things, they interrupt, say "they know all that," "they don't like to be told," "they knew that beforehand." Very likely they do not really know. This was not the way that JESUS acted. He did know, but He listened quietly and respectfully to what was said, and then He asked questions that some of the things might be more fully explained. We may be sure that these were not impertinent questions. And He did not ask them because He was ignorant. Perhaps He asked them to help the doctors themselves to understand better the things *they taught*; perhaps it was for the sake of some *of the other* children there who would not *understand* so well as He did. You know how a

boy or girl who answers well in school is listened to by the others, and how often they learn a great deal from such a one.

A teacher in a large public school once, at Christmas-time, asked the forty girls in her room when the first Christmas Day was? when JESUS CHRIST was born? She passed the question all round the room, and not one could answer until it came to the last, a little girl, who had kept her hand up all the time, and now answered, "Eighteen hundred and eighty years ago." "Quite right. Where did you learn that?" "At the Catechising at Church."

This will show us one good we gain by following the example of JESUS and going to the Catechising. We shall learn a great many things we could not learn anywhere else. Indeed, our Lord sets us a good example. He was growing to be a big boy; and besides, as the Son of GOD, He knew everything, but still He went to Catechism. If you children want to be like Him you will come, come regularly, and be very attentive while you are there.

But JESUS CHRIST did not only go to the Catechism. He had been in the Temple before. He had been to the sacrifice, He had kept the feast, He had been to worship. So, too, you must not be content with Catechism or Sunday school. No child of twelve must think he has done enough on Sunday when He has come to Sunday school or to *Children's Service* and Catechism. If he *wants to be like JESUS* he will go to worship first,

he will go to the sacrifice in the morning, and then come to the Children's Service and Catechism in the afternoon. We have not kept Sunday well if we have not been to Church to worship as well as to learn.

When the Catechism was over, and Joseph and His Blessed Mother came for Him, JESUS left the Temple and went with them. He did not think Himself too old now to be obedient, nor yet too big to go home with Mother. He was not ashamed to be seen walking in the streets with His Mother; He did not think it babyish, and that it would look as if He needed to be taken care of. Boys, there is nothing to be ashamed of in being obedient to mother, nothing manly in being disobedient. You need not be ashamed of letting people see that you love her and care for her, and wish to show her respect and reverence.

Children, be like JESUS CHRIST—God's Will first. Be willing to be taught *that*, that you may know how to worship and obey Him rightly. Then your parents' will. Try to find out and do that well, for in so doing you are obeying God. God says, "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord."

"And JESUS went down with them unto Nazareth, and was subject unto them."



JESUS CHRIST AT NAZARETH.

S. Mark vi. 3.

Third Sunday after Epiphany.

JESUS AT WORK AT NAZARETH.

S. LUKE ii. 51. S. MARK vi. 3.

JESUS CHRIST went back with the Blessed Virgin Mary, His Mother, from Jerusalem, and lived there quietly for eighteen years more. Every year He went up to Jerusalem three times to keep the three great feasts that **GOD** had appointed, but all the rest of the time He remained at home with His Mother. At first **S. Joseph** was there too, but he died while **JESUS** was still a boy, and then the Holy Mother and her only Son lived happily together until **JESUS** was thirty years of age. Think of that ! I wonder how many sons would be content to live alone with mother until they were as old as that !

What did **JESUS** do during those years ? He was not idle, we may be quite sure. **JESUS** and His Mother were not rich people. As the Son of **GOD**, He possessed the world and everything in it ; "but though He was rich, for our sakes He became poor." When He came into the world He was born of a poor Mother, so poor that when she went to present her only Son in the Temple she could only afford to give two doves, and not a lamb, as most people did.

If they were poor, did they beg? Certainly not; that would have been disgraceful. Nothing is more disgraceful than for one well and strong to beg. Our Blessed Lord never did anything for which we need to be ashamed of Him; He did not beg.

He worked for His living. In our picture we see Him working. We will look at it again presently, but let us just see what He is doing. He is working as a carpenter. Yes. Joseph, the faithful steward who had cared for Him when He was a little Child, was a village carpenter, and he taught JESUS his own trade. Does it seem strange that when the Son of GOD came into the world as man He should work at a trade for His living? It is not really strange. There is no disgrace in working. When Almighty GOD made the world we are told that He worked six days, and then rested on the seventh. And we are told that He still works to take care of the world He has made.

When the world was ruined by sin the Son of GOD came to redeem it, and to restore it that it may be GOD's own fair world again. And this He did by much toil as well as by suffering. His work in the carpenter's shop at Nazareth was a part of that life of toil by which He redeemed the world. That which GOD does, that which the Son of GOD did when He came to redeem the world, must indeed be honourable. There was indeed a time when GOD had cursed the ground for man's sake, and had told him that he should only eat *bread after the sweat of his brow* and in continual *sorrow*; but our Blessed Lord by coming and

working as man has taken all curse away and given honour and dignity to honest labour.

Let us never wish we had nothing to do, never wish we could live in idleness all our life. We should not be happy so, and we should not be like JESUS.

“O boys, be strong for JESUS,
To toil for Him is gain,
And JESUS wrought with Joseph
With chisel, saw, and plane.”

JESUS CHRIST worked, and we may be quite certain He did His work well. What did the other boys and young men think of His work? Do you remember that the enemies of our Lord took Him afterwards and bound Him, and tried to get Him condemned to death? When they did this they tried to find some one who had seen Him do something wrong. Jerusalem, where He then was, was full of people, and all the men of Nazareth were there, all those who had been boys with Him and grown up with Him in the same town, some of them working with Him at the same trade. But though His enemies tried all they were able, they could not find one to say that He had been untrue or dishonest, or that He had failed to do His work well. They found no fault in Him. Suppose that all the boys and girls who know you now and go to school with you, or play with you, grow up, and in twenty years' time some one asks them what sort of a person you are, will they be able to say, “I have known such a man or woman more than twenty years, ever since we

were little children, and I have never yet seen or heard of him or her doing the least wrong thing"? How grand if they can say this of you!

Our Lord must have been often tempted to do wrong, for Nazareth was a very wicked place. There must have been boys who asked Him to leave His work to play. There must have been men who would cheat by putting in green wood when they ought to have put hard-seasoned wood, or by just gluing or sticking pieces together when they ought to have been carefully nailed or screwed. Carpenters do cheat sometimes. Once there was a bad place in the roof of a Church, and the roof seemed sinking in. An architect was sent for, and he went up on a long ladder. When he got up and looked around he cried out, "Ah, I see. This roof is all good *oak*, but just here some bad fellow has put in a piece of common soft wood and it has rotted. He did not think I should be up here and find him out." No, but he knew GOD would find him out, and it was dreadful to cheat in putting on the roof of God's House. Our Lord did not so. He worked with all His heart, and He did His work well, for He did it for GOD.

Now let us look at our picture again. We know that it is a picture of JESUS CHRIST, because the figure has a *glory* or *nimbus* round the head, and the *glory* has a *cross* inside. We can always *by this tell* pictures of JESUS so. All the saints have "*glories*," but His "*glory*" has a cross as well.

And we know what He is working at if we look at His tools. They are the tools of a carpenter.

First there is an *axe*. The axe is used to cut down trees, and also to prepare them for the carpenter's use in building or making things. The axe is used, too, for cutting down bad trees which do not bear fruit, and are of no good to anybody. Before JESUS came it was foretold that all bad trees would be cut down and burned. Bad trees mean bad people, and this will be done when JESUS comes again (S. Matt. iii. 10; vii. 19; S. Luke xiii. 6-9; S. John xv. 6).

In His hand He holds a *square*. This, you know, is used to test work with and see that it is rightly done. By the square we find out if all the sides of a thing are straight and all the pieces fitted well and carefully together. JESUS CHRIST would not be afraid of letting any one test His work with a square. He tested it all Himself as He went along.

Some day He will come and test all our work. Will He find that it can all bear to be tested by His square? Did you ever hear the expression "on the square," or that such a man does his work "on the square"? That means that he is honest and true, that he can be depended upon in all business, everything is open and straightforward. This is the work JESUS our Master likes. Do you think He always finds it so? What do you say, boys? Lessons and exercises at school? Games with other boys? Errands for

parents? Excuses? Are they all "on the square"?

There are *compasses* too. These are for measuring to see that the work done corresponds with the drawing or pattern given. It is well that we should "look at our copy." God gave Moses a pattern of all the work to be done for His House, and told him to see that he did it all according to the pattern. We all have one great pattern—the Life of JESUS CHRIST. See that your life is like His.

In His left hand JESUS holds a *roll*. I suppose this is the plan or drawing of some house He is to build, or some work He is to do, and He has been looking at it. But He is not looking at it now. He is looking away and upward. Is He asking His Heavenly Father to be with Him in the work? Perhaps so.

Perhaps His thoughts have gone quite away from the work and the house He is building, and He is thinking of the heavenly House, the House not made with hands, the foundation of which He is indeed laying by His earthly life of toil. Perhaps He is thinking of the many mansions of His Father's House, where He will gather in all the children who have been true to Him, and have worked with and for Him on earth.

Sometimes people think that their earthly work is a hindrance to them; that they cannot serve God *because they have to work so hard, have so many things to do*. It was not so with JESUS. In all *His life He was serving God*, in all His life He was

one with His Father, and His Father with Him ; work did not separate them. All His work at Nazareth was part of His whole life-work by which, as well as by His death, He brings the world back to God.

Our work need not hinder us. We are God's children all the time ; He is with us when we are doing our work. Only let us think of this and do our work for Him, and instead of hindering us our work will lift us up and keep us near to God.

And our work is part of CHRIST's work. Everything we do right, every little work we do, is helping on the heavenly Kingdom, is helping to build up God's House, His Church.

Don't let us grumble, then, because we have to work. Let us work ; let us do our work well ; let us do our work for God ; let us do it all with the thought of heaven in our mind, and with the one wish, that we may in all things be like JESUS CHRIST.



OUR LORD AT PRAYER.

S. Mark i. 35.

Fourth Sunday after Epiphany.

OUR LORD PRAYING AT NAZARETH.

S. MATTHEW xiv. 23.

OUR Lord JESUS lived at Nazareth and obeyed and worked. He also prayed. How do we know that He prayed when nothing is told us about it? We will see what we can find out.

When we want to know how people have been brought up, what sort of home they had, and what kind of children they were, we look at their habits after they are grown up. If we see them good and gentle, obeying GOD and taking care of those around them, we think they must have had a good home and have been good children when they were young. The habits and ways of childhood almost always show themselves in grown-up people.

When our Lord was thirty years of age He came away from Nazareth. One of the first things we hear of Him at His Baptism is that He was *praying*. And afterwards all through His life we hear the same thing. Sometimes we are told that He rose up early in the morning, a great while before day, that He might pray. At other times, after His day's work was over, He would go up into a mountain to pray, and even continue all night in prayer to GOD. Now we may be quite

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sure He did not begin so good a habit then. He was only doing what He had been accustomed to do all His life.

Let us learn from JESUS to begin to pray when we are young. If we leave it until we grow up we shall find it very hard. There are so many things to be done, we have so many things to think of, so many things to trouble us then. Besides, there will be this great temptation. We shall be tempted to think that if we have done without prayer so long, we can do without it always. But if a boy begins to say his prayers regularly when he is three or four years old, he will get into the habit, so that he will never like to go to bed or get up without saying them, he will feel that he has left something undone. If he begins young and keeps on, he will learn to love his prayers, so that he cannot be happy without saying them. In all our Lord's busy life He prayed. He began well, and continued well to the end.

We may see, too, how He found time to pray. When He knew that He was going to have a very busy day, with little or no time to Himself, He got up earlier, that He might be sure to get time to pray. When He had been working all day and was very tired, still He would not sleep without His prayers. He stayed up late to pray when every one else was gone to rest.

We may be sure from all this that He prayed *at Nazareth*. And there is another reason, too, for *thinking so*. When His enemies brought Him to *trial, and tried so hard to find something of which*

to accuse Him, if He had not prayed would not somebody certainly have said, "*He never said His prayers*"?

In our picture JESUS is kneeling at prayer. He kneels upright, very reverently, with His hands clasped and His eyes looking up to Heaven. This is the way we should always kneel when we pray.

It is not reverent to pray lounging about and looking round. Much less is it reverent to pray lying in bed; that is no prayer at all. We must remember that we are speaking to Almighty God in Heaven, and speak to Him with great respect. I hope we all kneel reverently when we pray.

When you are very tired at night you will find it a great help to kneel so. If you lean against something, or kneel with your head resting on the bed and your face buried in the clothes, you will be almost sure to go to sleep. You will not do this if you kneel upright, and do not touch anything.

Besides this, if you kneel so when you pray, others will know what you are doing. If you were saying your prayers and some one came into the room, what would you do? Would you kneel on and finish them, or would you stop and jump up, and try and look as if you had not been praying? Kneel quietly on and finish your prayers, and whoever comes in will see what you are doing, and will go about the room quietly because you are praying. But even if they made a noise you must still go on. Do not be ashamed of your prayers. *Let me tell you a story about this.*

A gentleman who had been a captain in the navy told me that when he was a boy he was well taught at home, and went to Church, and always said his prayers. When he was quite young he went to sea. The first night he wanted to say his prayers, but there were several boys in the cabin with him, and he did not like to kneel before them, so he thought he would say them in bed. He did so that night, and for a few nights after. But he used to get very tired, and then to fall asleep over them, and so he very soon gave up saying prayers at all. None of the other boys in the room said any. After he had been at sea some time, perhaps a year, another boy came on board the ship, and he was put to sleep in the same room as these boys. He seemed to be a very bright nice boy, and they all thought they would like him. On the first night, when the time came for going to bed, the new boy stopped talking and laughing, and then knelt down to say his prayers. The others looked at him with surprise, then most of them laughed aloud, and some threw things at him. He took no notice of them, but quietly finished his prayers and went to bed. The next night he knelt again. This time they only laughed, but no one spoke to him or threw anything at him. The third night when he knelt down, my friend said he was so ashamed of himself that he slipped out of bed, knelt down by the side of the new boy, and said his own prayers *too*. Next night another boy followed the example, *and before a week was over all the boys in that room knelt down to pray. As long as my friend*

remained in the ship not one of those boys went to bed without first kneeling down and saying his prayers.

We ought to be earnest and reverent in our prayers at all times, and especially when we are in God's House. Of course, if for any reason we cannot kneel down, God will accept our prayers in any other position if we are reverent. If you came to Church at the time of Holy Communion, and there were many communicants, so that the service was very long, and you were tired and could not kneel all through—some people cannot kneel a very long time—what should you do? Don't sit down and look about, but stand up. You know the Jews always prayed in God's House standing, and God accepted their prayers, so when we really cannot kneel we may stand very quietly and reverently, and God will receive our prayers as if we knelt.

We must not leave our prayers unsaid because we have not a nice place to say them in. Some people can set a room apart and make it a kind of oratory or chapel in which they always go to pray, but all cannot do this. Our Lord JESUS prayed on a mountain, or, as we see Him in the picture, kneeling in a garden; S. Peter prayed upon the top of the house. It is best when prayer-time comes to say our prayers wherever we may happen to be, though of course we would rather go away quietly *and alone*. Prayer is a duty we owe to God, and

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we must be sure to give it, and never make any excuse of time, or place, or person, to keep us from it.

Another day we will think of some other reasons why we should pray. To-day our Lord teaches us to pray regularly, to pray reverently, and to begin to pray when you are young.

Children, you will never be sorry for it if you begin to be careful about your prayers ; more than that, you will some day be very glad.

Not long ago an English general and his officers were set upon and cruelly murdered by some heathen. They thought all was peace, and suddenly the savage men burst in upon them, and after a few minutes of dreadful suffering they were all dead. When the names of those who were killed were printed in the newspapers I found the name of a boy who was at school with me. I could not remember much about him, but I did remember a little, and that little made me glad. As I thought of his cruel death amid those heathen, it made me glad to remember that when he was a boy at school *Charlie always said his prayers.*

Fifth Sunday after Epiphany.

JESUS PRAYING FOR THE FORGIVENESS OF SIN.

GENESIS iii. 17-19.

LET us turn back again to-day to our picture of last time, and look at it a little more. It is a picture of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, and He is kneeling at prayer. He is praying out of doors in a garden, and yet we do not see beautiful flowers springing up around. What are these that we do see? Thorns and thistles. Let us think why these are there, why our Lord is pictured to us kneeling in the midst of thistles.

When man was made by GOD he was very good, and he was put into a beautiful garden to keep it for GOD. When he fell into sin he was cast out of the garden, and GOD said that the ground was cursed for his sake, and that because of his sin it would now bring forth thorns and thistles. So when we see thistles we see that GOD's words were true, and we cannot help thinking of *sin*.

When we come before GOD to pray we always have to think of sin, we always have to come and ask for forgiveness of sin. These thistles, then, are meant to teach us that JESUS CHRIST is praying *for the forgiveness of sin*.

But had He any need to do this? Was there any sin for which He must ask forgiveness? Let us think about this.

There are two kinds of sin—*original* sin, that is, the sin in which we are born; and *actual* sin, that is, the sin which we ourselves commit. Now JESUS was not born in sin, for He was born by the power of the Holy Ghost of the Blessed Virgin Mary. And He never committed any actual sins; for we know that, try as they would, His enemies could find no fault in Him. *We* cannot help having original sin, for we are born in it without any fault of our own; but we need not have any actual sins, that is, if we have been baptized. In Holy Baptism Almighty GOD gives us Grace; and if we would only be true to this and use it, we should find it enough to keep us from all actual sins. There are some who have done so; would that we all had!

JESUS CHRIST was free from original sin because of His wonderful birth, and He was free from actual sins, *not* because He was true to baptismal grace—He did not receive that, and did not need it—but because He was the Son of GOD.

So when He prays for forgiveness of sin it cannot be for His own sin. No! He is praying for the forgiveness of our sins, and He prays for forgiveness for them as if they were His own. And He prays not for the sins of one person, but *of the whole world*; the iniquity of us all is upon *Him*. The sins of the whole world were pressing *on Him*, He felt them all, all that ever had been

and all that ever would be committed. What a terrible load of sin this must have been ! We must try and understand how this was.

JESUS felt all the burden of our sins by what we call the power of sympathy. "Sympathy" comes from two Greek words, and it means to "suffer with." He suffered with us in our sorrow for sin. He took upon Him our nature. Not the nature of one person, as if GOD had come down into some little infant to live and suffer and die in the person of that child, but He took the nature of all. He took that human nature which belongs to every child of Adam. Now if you see any one in very great pain or sorrow, you feel for them, you are sorry for them ; if it is some one you care for, you feel that sorrow or pain as if it were your own, you have sympathy for them, you suffer with them. Now that is *natural* ; it is part of our human nature to be sorry for and to have sympathy for those in suffering.

But if we were good it would be just so with sin. Good people feel the burden of sin. Bad people don't care anything about sin, but good people feel it ; if they fall into ever so small a sin they feel it as a real pain. And so too they feel other people's sins. We all know a little of what it is to feel other people's sins ; we don't like to hear bad words ; we don't like to see children cross and disobedient ; these things hurt us, we feel sorry for them. But oh ! if we were really good *we should feel these things so much more.* We

should feel every one's sins as if they were our own; we could not bear that GOD should be insulted and grieved; we could not bear to see any suffer for sin.

JESUS CHRIST was really good, so that though He had no sin of His own He suffered intensely for every sin that He saw. And then He was GOD, so that He saw every sin that ever had been committed, and He could look on and see every sin that would be, so He felt by sympathy all the actual sins of men.

Besides this, He knew what GOD had intended man to be, and so He could see all that had come from the sin of Adam; He could see all the sorrow that comes to us by original sin, and so He felt the burden of original sin.

Thus it was that though JESUS CHRIST had no sin of His own, either original or actual, yet He was crushed by a sense of sin, He felt the double burden, and kneeled down and prayed for forgiveness.

Children, does not our Lord teach us a lesson against being selfish in our religion? We are apt to think, even when we are quite in earnest, that it will be enough if we keep ourselves from sin; that it does not matter to us what others do, we are not to blame, we are not responsible for their sins. This is not like JESUS. We ought to feel every sin as if it were our own, and be as earnest in *asking for forgiveness* for others as for ourselves.

Surely, too, this ought to keep us from ever

making light of sin. Sometimes when people hear swearing or bad words they laugh at it as if it were something funny. Sometimes people encourage others in faults, or do not check them and prevent a sin when they can. This is very dreadful. Never think little of sin, never laugh at sin, but pray that those who sin may be forgiven, and that you may never do the like.

When you pray for forgiveness for yourselves or others, you may remember our Lord's sympathy and prayer for forgiveness ; indeed, you ought to, for it is this that gains us forgiveness. It is because JESUS CHRIST has taken our nature, and felt the burden of our sins, and prayed for our forgiveness, that we can be forgiven, and that we can pray to be forgiven for His sake.

Do let us be in earnest in watching against sin ; never let us make little of it. Think how dreadful the burden was upon your dear Lord, and do not add anything to it. Sin is very dreadful ; let us pray earnestly for forgiveness for ourselves and others, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord.



S. ELISABETH.

S. Luke i. 13.

Septuagesima Sunday.

ELISABETH—THE MOTHER OF THE FORE-RUNNER.

S. LUKE i. 13-17.

WE will leave the life of our Lord JESUS to-day and next Sunday, and think a little about two persons who were living at the time He was born, and who had a great deal to do with some of the events in His life.

When the time came for JESUS CHRIST to be born, GOD made all things ready for Him. He had been preparing the world for more than four thousand years, but at the end of that time there were a few special things to be done, some special preparation to be made. There must be some one provided who should go among the people and tell them that JESUS the Saviour had come. And JESUS would need to be baptized before He began to preach and teach the people and do great works among them; some one must be provided to baptize Him.

GOD sees all things. He sees the end from the beginning. He saw all this, and arranged for it. He saw the day when JESUS would be standing by *the river Jordan* waiting for Baptism, and He saw

that all the people were so busy with the things of the world ; and when they thought about the coming Saviour at all, were expecting some one so different from JESUS CHRIST, that they would have to be roused up and taught what kind of a Saviour they were to expect. GOD foresaw all this ; and so He foretold by His prophets many years before that He would send a messenger to prepare the way before the Lord, a messenger who would cry out and call people into the wilderness, who would turn people's hearts to GOD, would bring down the proud and lift up the lowly, and teach them how the glory of the Lord would be revealed.

The time had now come for this messenger, whom we call a *Forerunner*, because he went before Christ, to be born. GOD sent an angel to tell of his birth. The angel went to Jerusalem, the city of GOD, to GOD's Temple. In the Temple an aged priest called Zacharias was offering incense before GOD. He had gone in to lead the people in their worship and to offer the sacrifice for them. He was very old, and he had been praying for many, many years for the coming of CHRIST. Beside this, he had been praying for a son ; for though they had been married so long his wife Elisabeth had no children, and had got so old that she had almost given up expecting any. Neither she nor Zacharias had quite given up hoping for a son, for they remembered one as old as she to whom GOD *had given* a child in her old age. You remember *her too*—Sarah, the mother of Isaac. So they still *prayed*. All good people wish to have children ; it

is only bad people who don't like having them, or wish they had none. Elisabeth was good ; and besides this, she was descended from Sarah, and she knew that the Saviour Who was coming was to be a son of Sarah, and thought and hoped that if she had a son he might perhaps be the Saviour, and what a joy that would be ! Think of the joy of being the mother of Him Who would deliver her people from sin !

The angel came in and told Zacharias that his prayer was heard, and that his wife Elisabeth should have a son, and that this son should be the Fore-runner to prepare the way of CHRIST, "to turn the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

Zacharias did not believe the angel. How strange ! But angels are not always believed. GOD once sent two angels to tell the people of a city that He was going to destroy it, but the people only laughed at them. I think it would be just the same now. When children hear about the angels, and about their own guardian angel, they sometimes think, "Now if I could see an angel, if an angel were to come and tell me to be good, oh ! I would try, indeed I would." Very likely you would not. When you had looked at him, and admired his beauty, and listened to his sweet voice, you would go away and do just what you did before. No ! If you will not listen to your parents, your teachers, your priest, your Bible, you would not listen to an angel from Heaven.

God punished Zacharias for his unbelief. He

made him dumb ; so that when he came out of the Temple and stood upon the steps, and all the people waited expecting that he would bless them, he could only make the sign of blessing, but could not speak one word. He would not believe God, and so he could not speak in God's Name.

When his service at the Temple was over Zacharias went home and told his wife. He must have written it all down for her to read, as he could not speak. How sorry she was for his dumbness, but oh, how glad for the words he brought her ! See her in the picture. She seems to be sitting all alone thinking over the wonderful message she has received. She is really to have a son ! It is true that this son will not be the Saviour, that cannot be ; but he will be the next best thing to that, he is chosen by God to prepare the way for the Saviour. And then her thoughts must have gone on to the Saviour Himself. God had visited and redeemed His people. What a wonderful change this would make in everything ! Was it not well worth waiting for and praying for ? Though she could not herself be the mother of JESUS, it must have been a great joy to know that He would come in her time ; she should see Him with her own eyes.

And then do you not think that her thoughts must have turned back to her own son, chosen for so great a work ? How she must have prayed that *he would be worthy of it, that he would be really good ! It must have been such a comfort to think*

that GOD had promised he should be filled with the Holy Ghost from his very birth. If only he would be true to the gift, if only he would let GOD the Holy Ghost lead him, then he would indeed be good and fit to be the Forerunner to prepare the way for JESUS. GOD had promised that her son should turn many of the children of Israel to Him, and should make ready a people prepared for the Lord ; but oh, if when he had done this he should be lost himself, oh, how earnestly she must have prayed !

And I think she must have prayed with great confidence ; for she must have felt that if GOD had said so much about her son, and promised so much, surely He would help him to be faithful, and all would be well.

And so her face looks full of wonder at the news she has heard, full of great joy at the blessing she has received, and full of peace because she trusts in GOD.

Now one thing we must learn from the story of Elisabeth is *patience*.

She waited a long, long time, and it seemed as if what she prayed for would never come, but we are not told that she murmured against GOD ; she waited patiently, and at last the blessing came.

How dreadfully hard it is to be patient, harder perhaps for children than for grown-up people ! Boys know this very well. They want to be grown up all at once ; they want to be able to do all that *their big brothers* or fathers can do, they don't like

waiting. And if a girl is expecting a present, perhaps a birthday is coming next week, and she knows what birthday gift she is to receive, how she longs for it! how impatient she sometimes gets! "Oh, please, could not I have it now? I could have something else, you know, next week."

Many years ago I read a story of a little boy who came from school very hungry indeed. Mother told him he must wait a little while, for the dinner had gone round to the baker's to be cooked, and the man would bring it soon. But little Jem was very impatient, and would go and get it himself. The baker did not want to let him have it, but he said he must, and got it. On the way home the dish was very, very hot, it seemed to get hotter and hotter, until at last he could carry it no further. He let it drop. The dish broke, and the dinner was all lost in the mud. He had better have been patient.

And, children, it is just the same in spiritual things. We have to learn to be patient in these as much as in the common things of daily life. We want to be good, but it is so hard to wait. It is so hard to go on praying and trying and not seeming to get any better; so hard to find the same faults coming back again and again, to find that we have done the very things we did mean not to do; so hard to be patient when people perhaps tell us it *is of no use trying*, when Satan whispers bad *thoughts of GOD*, and tells us we had better give up.

But, children, we must not give up. We must keep on trying. Every day we must watch against our faults. Every night we must think over the day to see if we have been bad or good. Every night and morning we must pray that GOD will be pleased to make us better and better. And if we get better very slowly we must be patient. If you find you have got over one small fault, if you are more obedient, more truthful, more gentle, that is something to be very glad of. When you find you really have done well you will be more patient in trying and in waiting for the time when you will be perfect.

It will help you, too, if you remember that GOD sees the end from the beginning. He knows just what you really need. He sees if you really want to be good, and He will give you just the very thing that will most help you. He will not give you what you expect, very likely He will not give just what you ask for, but He will give the right thing. So you can learn not only patience, but "trust in GOD." He sees what needs doing, and will do it.

We may learn a little about this from two names. You know that the names of people mentioned in the Bible almost always have a meaning; very often they were given to them because of their meaning.

Now the name "Elisabeth" means "The oath of GOD," or "That which GOD has promised." So whenever Elisabeth thought of her own name it *would remind her that what she was expecting and*

praying for would come because "God had promised."

When her son was born he was called John, a name which God commanded to be given to him. And "John" means "God is gracious," or "The grace of God."

So we may learn that whatever God promises in His own loving purposes He will graciously fulfil. If He tells us to be good and promises help, He will surely give the grace by which we may.



S. JOHN BAPTIST.

S. Matt. iii. 1, 2.

Sexagesima Sunday.

**S. JOHN THE BAPTIST—THE FORERUNNER
OF OUR LORD.**

S. MATTHEW iii. 1-6.

TO-DAY we are to think about S. John the Baptist. Last Sunday we heard about his father and mother and the wonderful message that the angel Gabriel brought, saying that he was to be the Forerunner to prepare the way for JESUS CHRIST; to-day we are to see how that message was fulfilled.

Let us look at him in the picture. What is he doing? He seems to be standing still by a river, the river Jordan. If we could see more, we should see a large crowd of people standing in front of him. His hand is raised up, and he seems to be speaking to them. He holds a staff in his hand, and he seems to be speaking with authority, as if he were speaking in the Name of GOD.

When a man speaks in the Name of GOD we call it *preaching*. And this is what S. John is doing. He is preaching to the people, who have come in a great crowd from all parts of the country to listen to him.

S. John preached to the people and told them that JESUS CHRIST was coming very soon, that He *was already* in their midst though they did not

know Him, and he bid them make haste and get ready for His coming.

There was one very strange thing in his preaching, and this it was that brought so many to him; it was the way in which he told them to prepare. They were to prepare, not by getting their houses ready, not by building arches and decorating the streets of their cities with green boughs and flags, but by *repenting of their sins*. This was very different preaching from that which they were accustomed to hear.

But what did John mean by repentance? Giving up sin and doing better. Yes, but something more than that. It takes three things to make a good repentance.

First, they were *very sorry* for their sins. This was why they came to him, that they might hear about JESUS CHRIST, and be ready for His coming.

And they wanted to be better. But something came before that. They must own that they had been bad; they must confess their sins. It is of no use saying we wish to be better unless we are really willing to own that we have done wrong. So we read that they *confessed* their sins.

Then S. John taught them how to *amend* their lives and do better for the time to come.

Thus we see that their repentance was really good. They had "sorrow for sin," or *contrition*, as we call it; they made a good *confession*; and they promised amendment, or, as it may be called, *satisfaction* for sin.

So S. John taught them to prepare for CHRIST'S

coming by good and earnest repentance. "Repent ye ; for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

All sorts of people came to hear S. John. Poor and rich, ignorant and learned, were there. Tax-gatherers came, and even some soldiers who were marching by to war stopped to listen. And S. John taught them all the same thing ; he gave them all the same message—JESUS CHRIST was coming, and they must repent.

But he did not tell them they must all repent in exactly the same way. Each one must repent of and amend his own particular sins. To the tax-gatherers he said that they were not to overtax people. To the soldiers, that they were not to be violent and ill-treat people needlessly, and were to be content with their wages. To the poor he said that they were not to grumble, but see if there was not some one still poorer whom they could help. So he spoke to each according to their need.

When they had confessed their sins and promised to do better he baptized them. He took them one by one down into the river, and there he either plunged them into the water, or dipped the water up and poured it over them. This was to teach them that as water washes away all dirt and uncleanness, so they were by earnest repentance to put away their sins that JESUS might find them pure and good when He came.

Thus S. John did the work of a Forerunner in preparing people for our Lord's coming. Because he not only preached repentance, but also baptized, *he is called John the Baptist.*

Now if S. John were still living on earth I think he would say the same to us. He would say, "JESUS is coming again, and He wants you to live for Him now that you may be ready for Him then. And you must repent of your sins. Each one must repent of his or her own particular sins. You must be very sorry, and confess your fault, and try never to do the like again."

If any one had stolen, he would tell them to return what they had taken and never steal again. If any one had grumbled or been discontented, he would tell them to try and be satisfied with God's Will. One who had lied he would bid to be truthful. The disobedient he would teach to obey. If any had been greedy, wanting to have everything for themselves, he would teach them to give up to others and be kind and generous. So he would have a fitting word for all. Let each one try and think, "What would S. John say to me? What would he tell me I must repent of? Let me find out and repent and put it away, for JESUS CHRIST's sake."

When we think of S. John standing up alone before these crowds of people to tell them of their sins, we must, I am sure, think him very brave. Yes, it was a brave thing to do, for it would have been so much easier to tell them pleasant things and to try to amuse and interest them. But he did a braver thing even than this.

King Herod heard of him, and sent for him that *he might come and preach to him.* This was not

the Herod who put to death all the little children in Bethlehem hoping to kill JESUS. That Herod had been dead many years, and this was another king of the same name, and quite as wicked as the first.

Perhaps the king thought that because he was rich and powerful John would say only things such as he liked to hear, or perhaps he really wanted to try to put away his sins. When John came he spoke to the king in the same way as he had to others. The king at first listened to him, and did put away a good many sins. He was so wicked that he could give up a great many wrong things and yet be very bad, but he did not really *repent*. There was one thing worse than all he had done, and this he would not give up. He had taken his brother's wife to be his wife while his brother was still alive. In God's sight it is a most dreadful sin for any man to marry the wife of another man while he is still living. John told the king so, and that he must put her away from him. The king would not do this, and got very angry. Then he put John in prison, and kept him there a long time, bringing him out every now and then to see if he could get him to say something different. But no, John always said the same, "It is a great sin; you must put her away." John was not afraid. He was determined to do what God had given him to do; he would not excuse sin even in the king; and so he remained in prison until he died there by a cruel death.

This was brave indeed. It was far braver to

stay all alone day after day in prison when by saying one word he could have got out than it was even to preach to the people of their sins. John's courage and endurance were wonderful.

Now let us see if we can find out how it was that S. John was able to be so brave. Let us look at his picture again.

How is he dressed? He seems to be wearing only one garment, and that a very rough one. It is made of the hair of camels, and is girded round his waist with a leathern strap. This must have been a very hard and uncomfortable dress.

And his food was no pleasanter. We are told that he lived on "locusts and wild honey." Honey sounds nice, but think of living on *locusts*! Do you know what they are? They are large insects two or three inches long, like large grasshoppers, with large wings and legs. Very poor people would catch them and pinch off the legs and wings and then eat them. Would you like to live on crickets or grasshoppers? Some people think that the locusts he ate were not insects, but the beans of a tree called the locust-tree. I do not know that that seems any better: one would not care to live on nothing but cold beans and water, with a little honey sometimes.

Besides having an uncomfortable dress and poor food, S. John had lived in the wilderness all alone. He had lived this hard life all alone for a great *many*, perhaps nearly thirty years.

This was the first secret of his courage. He had

been very brave in dealing with himself. He had been very *self-denying*.

But besides being self-denying, we may be sure he had been very *repentant*. No one can be truly self-denying so as to please God unless they are first very sorry for their sins. So we may be quite certain that during those long years that S. John spent in the wilderness he thought upon sin and truly repented.

Thus it was that he prepared himself that he might be able to go and prepare others for the coming of JESUS CHRIST. He could well be brave and outspoken. People might say it was very hard to put away sin and live for God. Yes, he knew that. It was very hard to deny themselves and give up pleasures. Yes, he knew that, he had done it. They might say it was very hard to leave home and friends, perhaps to live all alone, that they might keep from some temptation. Yes, he knew that. He knew all these things, for he had done them. And he knew more, he knew that they could do them, for the same God Who helped him would help them.

Does not He help us to see what we must do if we would help others to be good and to live for JESUS? We must do it first ourselves. We must put away our own sins, or we cannot correct others. We must set a good example ourselves, or we can never lead others to be good. If we tell stories, it is of no use for us to say that lying is wrong. If we won't keep Lent, or will take our pleasure on *Fridays and Fast-days*, it is of no use for us to tell

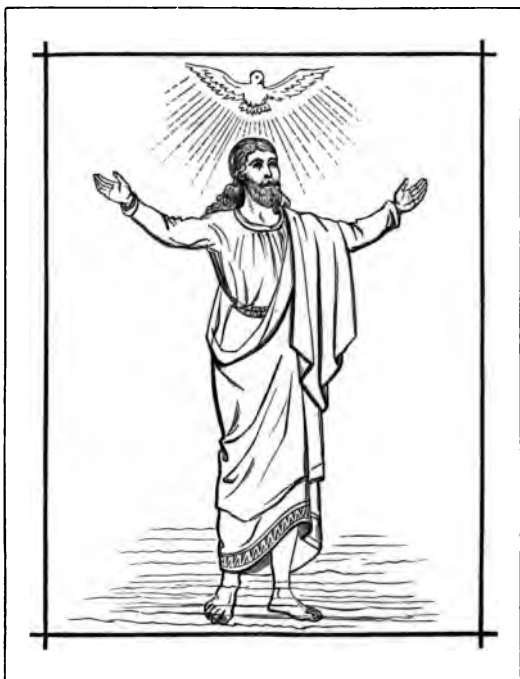
others they ought to be self-denying. The elder brother or sister must learn to obey father or mother, or they can't expect the little ones to obey them.

Be brave yourselves in your own life, and then you can be truly brave in helping others. The cross that S. John carries in his hand will teach you that. Carry your own cross first, and then you can help others to carry theirs.

But how could S. John be so brave in himself? I think that is easy to find out.

What do you suppose he did during those years in the wilderness? He was alone, and yet not alone, for GOD was with him. He spoke with GOD, and GOD spoke with him. He prayed.

Yes, children, it is hard to be good, it is hard to be brave, it is hard to help others to be good, but let us try to be more like S. John. Let us get away alone with GOD. Let us talk to Him. Tell Him your wishes, your sins, your troubles. He will hear you. He will help you to be good. And when you have really tried hard, and He sees you are in earnest, He will use you as He used S. John, He will let you help some one else to be good, He will let you be His messengers to prepare the way before Him.



JESUS CHRIST IS BAPTIZED.

S. Luke iii. 21, 22.

Quinquagesima Sunday.

OUR LORD BAPTIZED.

S. LUKE iii. 21, 22.

S. JOHN the Baptist, the son of Zacharias, was sent by GOD to prepare the way for JESUS CHRIST, and to teach people to repent of their sins, that they might be ready for CHRIST when He came. We have seen how well and bravely S. John did his work. He did his work well ; and GOD was pleased with him, and let him see JESUS, for Whom he had been preparing ; and more than that, He let him baptize JESUS CHRIST Himself.

It was at evening-time that JESUS CHRIST came to S. John as he stood by the river Jordan. The people had all been baptized for that day, and were gone home, and John was left all alone. Perhaps he was sitting down to rest ; perhaps he was kneeling down and praying for those he had baptized that they might keep good ; perhaps he was thinking of the Son of GOD for Whom he was preparing the way, and wondering when He would come, and praying for His coming.

While S. John was thus waiting all alone JESUS came and asked to be baptized.

Now S. John knew JESUS, for He was his own

cousin on his mother's side, and he knew how good and holy He was, though he did not yet know that He was the Son of GOD Who was to save mankind. He knew how good JESUS was, so when He asked to be baptized he did not think himself fit to do it. JESUS was so much better than himself that he said, "I have need to be baptized of Thee." He thought he had more need to be baptized by JESUS CHRIST than JESUS CHRIST had to be baptized by him.

In one way this was quite true. S. John baptized people that they might repent and confess and put away their sins, and he had repented of his own. JESUS had no sins to confess and repent of; He was not born in sin, so He had no *original* sin; and He had never done wrong, so He had no *actual* sin. He did not need the Baptism of Repentance. But then GOD had sent S. John to baptize, and all those who wished to do GOD's Will must go and be baptized by him. JESUS CHRIST says that He came to do His Father's Will, and so He too wished to be baptized. So He said to S. John, "Suffer it to be so now; for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." And when S. John heard this, and knew our Lord's reason, he did not object any more, but baptized Him in the Jordan.

We have learned now one reason why JESUS was baptized—it was that He might be OBEDIENT.

Here is a pattern for us. You will remember that S. John was able to tell people to repent and

to live good lives for GOD, even when they found it hard, because he had done the same himself. And JESUS our Lord is able to say to us, "Children, obey your parents," not only as GOD, but because when He became Man He Himself was obedient to His Father's Will.

Sometimes children are told to do things, and Satan tempts them to think they will not gain any good by them, they won't interest or amuse them, or make them better, and so there is no use in doing them. But we must not let such thoughts stay. It is enough that we are told to be baptized, to be confirmed, to go to Church, to receive Holy Communion, and to do a great many other things in our life; we must be *obedient*. Only let us be obedient, and we shall surely get a blessing from GOD.

What blessing came from the Baptism of JESUS? Two very great ones.

When He had been baptized He stood still, and, looking upward to Heaven, He stretched out His arms and prayed. We see Him so in the picture. And then you know the wonderful thing that happened: the heavens were rent open, and S. John saw a glorious light, and in that light the form of a beautiful Dove coming down and resting upon JESUS. This was GOD the Holy Ghost. He pleased to make Himself seen in this beautiful form as He came to take the Body of our Lord to share in all the glory of His Godhead.

And there was another wonder too, for the *glorious Voice* of GOD the Father was heard speak-

ing from Heaven, and saying, "This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased."

When S. John heard this, and saw the Holy Ghost descending, he knew that JESUS was the Son of GOD for Whom he had been preparing; that GOD had accepted his own work; that the Saviour of man was come.

This is the first blessing from our Lord's obedience in being baptized. He is declared by the Father and the Holy Ghost, before S. John and all the angels and the bad spirits, to be the Son of GOD.

Think of the joy of S. John. And think of the joy of all the blessed spirits round, how they must have burst out in a new song of praise, and joined with S. John in worshipping JESUS CHRIST the Son of GOD as well as Son of Man.

S. John knew *now* what GOD meant when He told him to teach people that JESUS when He came would baptize with the Holy Ghost and with fire, and knew that JESUS CHRIST, Who was born so poor, and lived such a quiet hidden life at Nazareth, was indeed the Son of GOD conceived by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary. When JESUS left him he must have gone home very happy. It would not matter now what happened to him. He had seen and worshipped JESUS the Son of GOD, and that was enough. If people came no more to Him for baptism he would not mind. If they took him and put him in prison and killed him there, it *would not hurt him*. His work had not been in *vain*. He had prepared the way, he had been

true to GOD, and JESUS was come. If it was GOD's Will, he was content to die now.

Indeed, children, it is one of the greatest blessings GOD can give us when He enables us to say, "I BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST THE SON OF GOD, THE SAVIOUR OF THE WORLD."

Our Prayer-Book tells us of the other great blessing that comes from our Lord's Baptism. It is one that has come to each of us.

You have often seen children baptized, and then in the first prayer of the service you have heard these words, "Almighty and everlasting GOD, . . . Who by the Baptism of Thy well-beloved Son JESUS CHRIST in the river Jordan didst sanctify water to the mystical washing away of sin."

These words tell us a wonderful thing, that ever since JESUS was baptized we have been able by Baptism to have our sins washed away. Oh, is it not a good thing that He was obedient and was baptized, to get this? JESUS knew all things; and He knew that though He did not need anything for Himself, yet His Baptism would not only declare Him to be the Son of GOD, but would sanctify water so that our sins could be washed away, and would be the means by which we should receive the Holy Ghost; and knowing this, He became obedient, and was baptized. How He loved us! and how we must love and thank Him!

You see how it is that this is so. JESUS CHRIST is GOD as well as man, and whatever He does He *does as GOD* in the power of the Holy Spirit as

well as man in His natural power. And because He does so He gives power and virtue to all that He does and touches. And this power and virtue flows on for ever for His people. You remember how JESUS worked for His living, and for His mother at Nazareth, and I have taught you how from His work there there comes virtue and blessing to sanctify all our work now if we do it for Him. So it is with His Baptism. He did not need to be baptized, but He pleased to make Himself appear like a sinner and obey His Father's Will, and by that to sanctify water, that when we are baptized in the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost our original sin is washed away, GOD the Holy Ghost comes upon us, and we are made "members of CHRIST, children of GOD, and inheritors of the Kingdom of Heaven."

We must always remember this, and thank GOD for our baptism. Oh, if we could only see these things, how wonderful! Think what it would be if when the clergyman standing by the font takes the little child into his arms you could see Heaven open and the glorious Light of GOD descending as you see in the picture, and covering the little one, and, as it were, embracing it in GOD's love; and if you could see the bright angels watching, and the one angel especially who will always after that take *particular* care of that little one, GOD's little one. *Yes, it would be beautiful, and we should like to see these things and hear GOD's Voice. But*

though we cannot see them now they are all true, and we believe and praise GOD for them.

We should think of this whenever we see a child baptized, and pray, as the Church tells us in the same prayer I have already told you of: "We beseech Thee, for Thine infinite mercies, that Thou wilt mercifully look upon this child: wash him and sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, that he, being delivered from Thy wrath, may be received into the ark of CHRIST'S Church."

We must pray that all GOD'S blessings may come upon that child. And then we must go on to pray that he may not forget his baptism, that he may always believe in GOD as his Father, and try to live for Him and love Him all the days of his life. As the prayer goes on, "And being steadfast in faith, joyful through hope, and rooted in charity, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world that finally he may come to the land of everlasting life, there to reign with Thee, world without end, through JESUS CHRIST our Lord. Amen."

"Holy Spirit, wondrous Dove,
Dew descending from above,
Breath of Life, and God of Love;
Hear us, Holy Spirit.

Thou on the Baptismal wave
Brooding with Thy power to save,
And from guilt our souls to lave;
Hear us, Holy Spirit.

Holy, loving, as Thou art,
Come and live within our heart,
Never from us to depart;
Hear us, Holy Spirit.



JESUS CHRIST IN THE WILDERNESS.

S. Luke iv. 1, 2.

The First Sunday in Lent.

OUR LORD IN THE WILDERNESS.

S. MATTHEW iv. 1, 2.

OUR Lord JESUS CHRIST was baptized by S. John the Baptist, the Forerunner whom God appointed. When He was baptized and prayed, the Holy Spirit came upon Him in the form of a Dove. It was by this that S. John knew that our Blessed Lord was not only Son of Mary, but also Son of God and the Saviour of the world.

We know that our Lord, though always the Eternal Son of God, yet while He was on earth laid aside for a time His Divine power and lived and acted truly as man. It is because He did this that His life is so really a pattern to us. Let us see, then, what He did after He was baptized; perhaps He will tell us something about the life of baptized children now.

“JESUS, being full of the Holy Ghost, returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.”

After His Baptism JESUS gave Himself to be led by the Spirit. And what a strange place the Spirit led Him to! We might have thought that *He would be led away to some beautiful place.*

When God created Adam and breathed into him the breath of life, He placed him in a beautiful garden, the garden of Eden (Gen. ii. 7, 8). Our Lord is called the Second Adam; because as Adam was the first man, and from him we get our natural life, so from our Lord we get spiritual life, and therefore He is to us in spiritual things what Adam was in natural things. We might have expected that our Lord, Who came to give us so great a gift, would have been led to a place at least as beautiful as that in which Adam was put. But He was not.

“He was led into the wilderness,” that is, into a place full of rocks and stones, very dry and dreary, with little or no grass, no houses, no trees or shrubs, and no people; perhaps it was almost all sand. All day long the burning hot sun, so much hotter than ours, would shine down upon Him, and all night the cold heavy dew would fall upon Him and wet Him through. In the night, too, He could hear the wild beasts prowling round Him, and growling as if they wished to come and eat Him. What a strange place for Him to be led to! And our Lord knew this before; He knew where He was going, and gave Himself up to be led there, to be led by the Spirit.

Now the first thing our Lord teaches us to-day is, that if we wish to be like Him we must give ourselves up to be led by the Holy Spirit. We *have all* received the Holy Spirit in our Baptism, *and many of us* have received the sevenfold gift in *Confirmation*. We must pray and ask Him to lead

us in all our life, and must give ourselves to Him to be led wherever He wills.

You see we must not want always to pick and choose. We must not want to choose the place where we shall live, the work we shall do, the people and things we will have round us. All must be as GOD the Holy Spirit leads. When we are little children our parents choose all these things for us; and if they are good they will ask the Holy Spirit to help them to choose rightly and what is best for the children. What they settle on, if they pray, is GOD's Will for their children, and children must not choose, but be content to live where their parents live, and have the things their parents give them.

When we grow older it is different, and we have to choose for ourselves. Then we must be sure earnestly to ask the Holy Spirit to lead us, and if we do ask Him we may be sure He will. But then we must remember that we must not always ask Him to lead us to bright, happy places, and to give us all things that naturally we would like to have, and we must not expect that He will always give us such things as these. We must ask Him to lead us where it is best for us, and where it is GOD's Will that we should go. It may be that He will take us into dull, quiet places, or into some place where we may have pain and sorrow. Perhaps we may be all alone, and so life will seem very like a wilderness. Well, never mind that, if it is where GOD leads us. So long as we pray and really *wish the Holy Spirit to lead us*, we shall not come

into any place that can really harm us, or have anything to suffer more than we can really bear.

JESUS went all alone into the wilderness ; we see Him in our picture sitting there upon a rock. He remained there forty days and forty nights, and during all that time He neither ate nor drank anything.

“Forty days and forty nights
Thou wast fasting in the wild.”

He was very hungry, and must have been very faint and weary, because He was man, and felt these things as much as you and I would.

But He did not remain alone all the time. He seems in our picture to be sitting weary and faint with fasting, and yet looking as if He were expecting some one. Whom is He looking for?

We are told that when He had fasted all this time the “Tempter came to Him.” *The Tempter*, that is, some one who wanted to tempt Him to sin. We all know who this Tempter is. He is the Devil, or Satan. He is that wicked spirit who was once a bright angel in the presence of God in Heaven, but because he would not obey God was cast out, and is now in this world. He has become very wicked, and his only thought is how to make all as wicked as himself. “He goes about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.”

He watched JESUS in that good life at Nazareth ; *he saw Him baptized ; he heard the Voice from Heaven which declared Him to be the Son of God ; and now that he saw JESUS all alone in the*

wilderness, faint and weary, he came to Him to try if he could by any means make Him sin.

So you see we must not be surprised if when we are really wishing to do right, really trying with our hearts to be good, really asking God the Holy Spirit to lead us, we are led into some places and things which are not pleasant, and, worse than that, are really tempted by Satan to do that which is wrong. We may be quite sure that the Tempter will come; and so instead of being surprised, we should be expecting him, looking out for him, that when he does come we may be ready to resist him and drive him away.

Now, how did JESUS resist the temptations, how did He drive the Tempter away? Three times He was tempted, and each time He resisted in the same way. He did not get angry, and say it was hard to be tempted; He did not fuss about it. He stayed quite quietly, and said, "It is written, Thou shalt not do it." What did He mean by saying, "It is written"? He meant that in the Bible, where God's Will was written down, God had already made some holy man write that this particular thing was not to be done. So He did not say, "I should like to, but I may not;" He did not say, "I will see if I can get leave;" but He answered out at once, "It is written in the book, God has said *No*; I cannot do it."

This would be the same thing as if when we were tempted we were to answer, "The Bible says." *As, for instance, we may have been told to do our*

lessons carefully in the evening, and then some other children want us to go off and play and leave the lessons until morning; that is temptation. Now if we want to resist like our Lord we should say, "The Bible says, 'Children, obey your parents.' Father told me to do this to-night. I will not go out."

Or if you were reading some nice book, and some younger brother or sister wanted you to do something for them, Satan might tempt you to say, "Go away, I can't be bothered with you now." Then you might resist by saying, "The Bible says, 'Be ye kind one to another.'"

Or perhaps some other child might come and tell you where there was some money that did not belong to you, or something else that was nice, and ask you to go away with them and take it. Then you would speak out at once, "It is written, 'Thou shalt not steal.'"

So be always ready to resist Satan with some good word from the Bible, or from your Prayer-Book or your Catechism, and be sure that he cannot make you sin. "Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

Satan is always trying to tempt children, but there are some times when he tries harder than at others. This time of the year is just such a time.

You know we are keeping Lent. Last Wednesday was Ash Wednesday, and to-day is the First Sunday in Lent. We keep Lent to remind us of our Lord's fast in the wilderness, and so because

we want to be like JESUS, Satan will come and tempt us.

Now if you want to resist his temptations, and I suppose you do, it would be very sad to be worse in Lent than at any other time; if you want to resist him you must try and be as much like JESUS as possible.

Be sure that you keep Lent well. Make it a real *fast*. I don't mean go without food all the time, but I do mean give up something, deny yourselves something for His sake. Every one can give up something. One can spend no money on sweet things or candy. Another can take no oranges or fruit. I have heard of children who took no cake, or preserves, or sugar in their tea all through Lent. Each one must say for themselves what they can do, only be sure you give up something you really care for. Of course we can all stay home from any parties or entertainments that may be going on. We would not go to these while JESUS is in the wilderness, would we?

And we must all very earnestly watch against sin. Don't do anything wrong all Lent. Don't be idle at school, don't be saucy or rude, never tell a lie, or be disobedient at home. Be very obedient, very careful to do everything well. Say your prayers carefully and earnestly.

Do try and keep Lent. As JESUS fasted and bore temptation for you, so do you try and bravely and lovingly do the same for Him. Then when *Lent is over*, and Satan has not been able to lead

you into sin, he will go away, and the blessed angels will come to make you happy at Easter, because by the good Lent you have kept you will show that you are indeed the good children of God.



JESUS CHRIST INVITES ALL MEN TO HIM.

S. John i. 39.

The Second Sunday in Lent.

JESUS INVITING ALL MEN TO COME TO HIM.

S. JOHN i. 39.

WE are still keeping Lent—indeed, we have only just begun to keep it ; but we have so few Sundays on which to learn about JESUS CHRIST, and there are so many things to learn, that we cannot give all these Sundays to thinking about JESUS in the wilderness. We will go on to-day and see Him as He comes back when His long fast was over.

When the forty days and nights were past, and Satan had tried his hardest to make our Lord sin, but had not been able to do it, he left Him. The blessed angels had been watching our Lord all the time, and waiting until they might do something for Him, and now they came and brought Him food.

When JESUS had received the food and was strengthened He came back full of the Holy Ghost to Jordan, to the very place where He had been baptized. Why did He come there ?

I think it was for this reason. It was there that the Holy Ghost had appeared and the Voice from Heaven had been heard declaring Him to be *the Son of GOD* ; as we would say now, it was

there that He was proclaimed and anointed for the work He came to do. And so He would begin His public ministry for men from that same place.

Perhaps, too, He wanted to show us how much we ought to think of our baptism. We ought ever to go back to it in our minds. Whenever we wish to live our lives for GOD, whenever we want to do something for Him, when we want to resist sin for His sake, we should think of our baptism. JESUS was already the Son of GOD, and so in His Baptism He was only declared to be that which He already was. We are born in sin, and need to be made GOD's children, need to be adopted by GOD; so, as you know, JESUS when He was baptized sanctified baptism that it might be the means by which our sin should be taken away, and we made the children of GOD, and have GOD the Holy Ghost dwelling in us. And this is never taken from us. When, then, we wish to be good, or when things are difficult for us to do, let us remember our baptism. Our power begins from that, and because we have been baptized with the Holy Ghost we are able to do all GOD's Will. Think of your baptism every morning, and make a new beginning every day.

JESUS CHRIST came back to Jordan. John was there still, and two of his disciples whom he had baptized were there with him.

JESUS did not speak to him this time; He only *passed by*. But John knew Him now; he did not *forget what he had seen*. So as he stood there he

pointed JESUS out to his disciples, saying, "Behold the Lamb of God Which taketh away the sin of the world." He had been preparing his disciples for JESUS, and now he did not wish to keep them for himself any longer; their GOD and Saviour was before them, and they were to go to Him.

The two disciples heard what their master said, and left him and went after JESUS. They did not know all that his words meant. They had not seen the Holy Ghost descending, and they did not know that JESUS is GOD. But they knew that they had sins to be forgiven, and that GOD had promised to provide an offering for sin; so when they were told that JESUS was that offering, "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world," they felt that they must go to Him, that they must be with Him. They had before given up much that they might be prepared by John for JESUS CHRIST, and now that He had come they would give up all, even their teacher himself, that they might be with JESUS Himself.

Our Blessed Lord heard them following, and knew all that was in their hearts, and so He turned round towards them and asked them, "What seek ye?" Perhaps they were surprised at the question, perhaps they hardly knew what they did want; but one thing they wished, and that was to be where He was, so they answered, "Master, where dwellest Thou?" "Where did He live, that they might come and see Him and hear His words, and then *bring others to Him?*" And JESUS did not *tell them and fix a time for them to come.* He

was so loving to them He bid them "come and see." I think we see Him in our picture, looking into their very hearts, and stretching out His hands towards them inviting them to Himself. "Come and see."

I wonder where He took them. He had no home of His own now. Perhaps He took them to the house of some good man who had given Him a lodging. Perhaps He led them back into the wilderness where He had been so long, and from which He had just come. I think it is very likely that He took them there that they might learn how hard their life must be if they would really follow and be with Him.

So they went and stayed with Him all day. It was about nine or ten in the morning when they followed Him.

What a wonderful day that must have been to them! *Their first day with JESUS!* How they would ask Him all their hearts wanted to know! Whether He was indeed the Messiah? How He was the Lamb of God? How He would take away sin? And when they heard this, how earnestly they would pour out all their sins and temptations to Him, how they would tell Him all their troubles! And oh! what wonderfully gentle, loving words of peace He must have spoken! What a joy to receive their absolution from the very lips of JESUS CHRIST Himself! There never was a day in all *their lives* like that. How glad they must have been that they had followed and heard Him say, "*Come and see*"!

These words that He spoke to them are the first words that JESUS spoke when He began His work among men after His Baptism, and He said them so many times. Indeed, it was the work of all His life to call men to come to Him, and it is that which He is doing and saying now. He is always saying to us, "Come and see." Let us think of this.

But first let us look at the picture again.

Our Lord has just come back from keeping Lent, from His long fast in the wilderness, but He does not look sad and gloomy. He is worn and thin, but still He is gentle and full of love.

Notice His dress too. It is a long and simple dress, something like S. John's, but not so rough, and there is a cord wound three times around His waist. That cord teaches us something. He had come to do His Father's Will in all things, and for this He had emptied and would deny Himself. So He bound Himself by a threefold rule. He would be *poor*, and have no home or possessions of His own; He would be *alone*, and have no family, no earthly love, no home ties; and He would be *obedient*, and have no will of His own, but do His Father's Will in all things. Sometimes you may see people now dressed like this, and then you will know that their threefold cord means that they have promised to live a life like JESUS CHRIST, and to have no money, no family, no will of their own.

Our dear Lord stands before us all, and He has one word for all, "Come unto Me;" "Come and see." How shall we come?

We do not know where He took the two disciples, but we do know where the house of JESUS is now. His Church. Oh, if we would remember this and come very much to His Church, and come to it not just because we have to come, but because we want to know and love our Lord, we should soon find out how good He is ! The more we come to Church, if we are really coming to Him, the more we shall love to come. Never let anything keep you from Church ; you will find JESUS here.

“Come and see.” He says this, too, when He says, “Suffer little children to come unto Me.” So we bring children to be baptized, for it is then that JESUS takes them up in His arms and blesses them. And we bring them to Confirmation too ; for though we only see the Bishop, it is indeed JESUS Who lays His hand upon them that they may receive the Holy Ghost.

In the Blessed Sacrament also it is JESUS CHRIST Who stands at the altar, though we only see the priest, and JESUS CHRIST Who blesses and gives us His own Body and Blood to be our food to strengthen and refresh our souls.

Yes, in the Church, and in all the Sacraments of the Church, we must hear the voice of JESUS saying, “Come and see ;” “Oh, taste and see how gracious the Lord is : blessed are all they that trust in Him.”

When our Lord says at another time, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,” He is speaking to us. *He tells us to come to Him in prayer and tell*

Him all our troubles and cares and wants, and then we shall see how loving He is, and how He will give His dear children such good things, more and better than they ever hoped for or expected to receive.

O children, in all your life, everywhere and every day, think of JESUS standing with outstretched arms calling you to come to Him, that He may guide, comfort, strengthen, bless you ! It is wonderful what He will do for those who really believe He means what He says, and pray and trust Him.

I have read of a little boy whose mother was a widow and very, very poor. One Sunday morning there was no food at all in the house for any of the children. Little Arthur had to go to Sunday school without any breakfast. But he knew he had one good Friend. There was the children's Communion that morning, and Arthur knew that JESUS would be there. He knelt quietly in his place until after the Prayer of Consecration, and then when some of the older children went forward to receive, he got up gently and knelt on the chancel step and told his dear Friend JESUS how hungry they all were at home, and asked Him to send them some food. Then he went quietly back to his place, and when service was over went home, sure that it would be all right. And so it was ; for almost as soon as he got there a good lady came bringing a basket with food for that day and *many days more*. Little Arthur only said, "I

knew it would come, for I went to Church and told JESUS," and then with a thankful heart he ran off to play.

Do try to think of this in all your life, and live with JESUS. We shall all hear Him speak once more. How joyful it will be if you have come to Him now as He calls you, and have tried to do His Will and live with Him ! You will see Heaven open, and all the glory of GOD and the saints and angels, and you will hear that loving Voice say, "Come, ye blessed children of My Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." "Come and see."



JESUS CHRIST TURNS WATER INTO WINE.

S. John ii. 7.

The Third Sunday in Lent.

OUR LORD AT CANA IN GALILEE.

S. JOHN ii. 1-11.

THE next place at which we hear of JESUS CHRIST is a little village called Cana, in that part of the country which was called Galilee. He was invited to go there, invited to a marriage, and He took with Him the two disciples we heard of last Sunday, and three more who had come to Him the next day.

We are not told whose marriage this was, but it seems likely that it was the marriage of some of our Lord's earthly relations. His Mother was there, and seems to have been quite at home in the house, taking charge of things, looking after the guests, and giving orders to the servants. Some have thought that it was the marriage of one of those cousins of our Lord who are called His brothers and sisters. We cannot tell this; but they invited JESUS, and He came.

What a nice thing it was to have JESUS at the marriage! It must have made them all so bright and happy.

Would it not be a good thing if JESUS were at all marriages? You know, He can and will be if we invite Him. Would not you like if you are ever married to have JESUS there to bless you?

Well, there is one way in which you can be sure to have Him. JESUS CHRIST dwells in His Church, and if you are married in His Church He is there to marry you.

When I say in His Church I do not mean only in a building called a church, I mean by a priest of His Church, and with the blessing of His Church. Just as it is JESUS CHRIST Who baptizes when the priest baptizes, so when the priest joins the hands of two persons in marriage it is JESUS Himself Who does it. This is why in the marriage service it is said, "Whom GOD hath joined together let no *man* put asunder." Be sure if you are ever married that you come to God's House to be married by God's priest. Or if it should happen that you are living in a place where there is no Church, and there are many such places in America and some other countries, then send for the priest to come and marry you at home. So will JESUS CHRIST be at your marriage.

When people are married in the East they always give a feast to their friends, and sometimes the feast lasts several days. At this happy marriage where JESUS was, there was a feast. If they were our Lord's relations, they were not very rich people, and more had come to the feast than they expected, for our Lord brought five disciples with Him. So we are not much surprised to find that before the feast was over the wine was all used up. This *must have been* a great trouble, for if they were *poor they could not easily get more.*

But there was one at the feast very loving and thoughtful for others, and she saw the need. You know who that was—the Blessed Mother of JESUS. And what did she do? She did the very best thing that she could, for she went and told her Son, just as she had been used to do in all her troubles before. You remember that He had lived with her for thirty years, and that it was only about seven weeks since He had left home and gone to be baptized. During all those thirty years she had been used to have Him with her, and in every trouble or need she had gone to Him, for she had no one else, to ask Him to help her, or tell her what was best to be done, and we may be quite sure that she had never gone to Him in vain. So now she went to Him quite confidently and said, “They have no wine,” feeling quite sure that He would find some way to help them; if He could not help as man He would as God.

Our Lord’s answer was, “Woman, what have I to do with thee? Mine hour is not yet come.” I will explain these words to you presently. They seem to us, do they not, as if He did not mean to help her? but His Blessed Mother knew better, she was quite sure she could trust Him.

And so she called the servants and said to them, “Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.”

What beautiful words! She could not have told them anything better. What better thing in all the world could they do than what JESUS CHRIST said?

These words seem to me to speak to us. 1

am quite sure that if any of you boys or girls could go to the Blessed Virgin now and ask her how you could be good, and how you could please God and come to Heaven, she would say the same to you. I know a school at Cowley S. John, near Oxford, where the children are always learning this lesson. It is a school built for poor children, where they may go not only on Sundays, but on every week-day, and learn about God. Over the gateway is a niche, and in the niche a beautiful figure of the Blessed Virgin holding JESUS as a little Child in her arms ; underneath are the words, "Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it." So every day as the children go in and out they look up, and there they see JESUS held up to them as a pattern, and are told what to do in all their work and play and troubles, "Be like JESUS CHRIST ; do what He tells you."

Might we not all try. When you want to know what to do, what is right for you to do, think of JESUS, of what He would say or do ; think of what His life teaches you, and so "*whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.*"

Now we must come back to our story.

In the picture you see six stone jars. These were very large, holding ten or fifteen gallons each. They were put there for water for the use of the guests at the feast. They needed a great deal of *water*, for the Jews were very particular about *purifying* their hands before taking food.

■ When the servants came to Him, JESUS said,

perhaps pointing, as we see Him there, "Fill the water-pots with water."

I wonder if the servants thought this a strange order. What could be the use of that? The water-pots were empty, the purifying was done; it was wine that was wanted, not water; why did He tell them to do this? Well, whatever they thought they asked no questions; they had been told to be obedient, and they obeyed. "They filled them up to the brim."

Our Blessed Lord's next words must have seemed stranger still, "Draw out now, and bear to the governour of the feast." How odd this must have seemed! They had just filled the water-pots with water, and now they were to take some out again and carry to the governour, who all the time was waiting for wine.

But again they obeyed. And now they were more surprised than ever. The water that they took was no longer water, but beautiful wine, better wine than any they had before at the feast. No wonder it was good when JESUS made it. He does all things well.

This was a great surprise to the servants, for they did not know who JESUS was. But you and I would not be surprised at anything JESUS might do. We know He is GOD, and can do all things.

Besides, He only did what He is doing every day. Every day He causes the refreshing rain to come down on the thirsty earth. The rain sinks in and reaches the roots of the grape vine. The

vine draws the rain up, and it passes all through the stem and branches until it reaches the grapes, and there it swells them out and fills them with delicious juice. Then the sun shines and ripens the fruit, and then it is gathered and pressed and made into wine. All this is GOD's work. So we see that JESUS at Cana only did in a few minutes what He is doing slowly every day.

JESUS CHRIST was able to do this because He is GOD.

Now I can explain to you what His answer to His mother meant.

He had been with her thirty years, and had worked for her, obeyed her, and helped her in all her troubles. But He did not do these things as GOD, but as *Man*. JESUS was both GOD and MAN, for by His Incarnation He had taken man's nature, and all these things belonged to His life as man. But this great work, this miracle, as we call it, of changing water into wine, was something quite different from those other works. He could not do this as man, but as GOD.

Now though she was His Mother He did not receive from her His Divine power by which He would do this. From her He had His human nature, but His power as GOD came from His heavenly Father only. So when He said, "What have I to do with thee?" He meant to remind her that while as *man* He had always obeyed her, *she had no authority over Him in Divine things, she could not command Him as GOD.* What He

did as God He would do at the time appointed by His Father.

I think He would say the same to her now if she were able to speak to Him in the same manner. If she could tell Him to take people to Heaven and to forgive their sins, and other things like that, He would remind her, no doubt very gently and lovingly, but still very clearly, that with these things she had nothing to do. He would tell her that all these things were according to the Father's Will, and that she must not presume to interfere in the things that belong to God alone.

Let us think of this wonderful work of JESUS CHRIST. It was His first miracle, but there were many others after it. We have seen Him in the cradle and in His home at Nazareth; and though He was so little and so poor, we have believed in Him, and worshipped Him as God. Now by these works He shows us that we were right to do so; He lets us see His power and glory, that we may believe in Him more firmly, and worship Him more earnestly and joyfully.

The more we do believe in Him and worship, the more ready we shall be to obey when we are told, "*Whatsoever He saith unto you, do it.*"



JESUS CHRIST FEEDS THE MULTITUDE.

S. Mark vi. 41.

The Fourth Sunday in Lent.

(REFRESHMENT SUNDAY.)

JESUS BLESSES THE FOOD.

S. MATTHEW xiv. 19.

WE have come now to the Fourth Sunday in Lent, or Midlent Sunday, as it is called, because it is the Sunday nearest to the middle of Lent.

In old times in England this Sunday was called "Mothering Sunday," because on this day all the boys and girls who had gone away from home out into the world used to try to go home and visit their mothers. If they could not go, they would write ; and if they went, they always took mother a present. The custom still remains among a few people in some parts of England ; perhaps you have read about it.* It was a very nice custom, and it would have been well to keep it up.

But to-day has another name besides. It has been called in the Church for many hundred years "REFRESHMENT SUNDAY."

This name was given to it because we are a little more than half-way through Lent, and it comes to us as a resting-place. Perhaps we are, some of us, a little tired of Lent. We started very bravely, and

* See a very beautiful story in "Copsley Annals."

meant to keep a good Lent, but things have been hard, and perhaps very different from what we expected or intended, and so we have got a little tired and out of heart. To-day, then, tells us to stop and rest a little, to stop and see if we are really keeping Lent with JESUS CHRIST, and to ask Him to refresh and help us that we may keep the rest of Lent better. You made good resolutions on Ash Wednesday, or on the First Sunday in Lent. Will you think how you are keeping them? I hope none of them have been forgotten. We must refresh them too.

The Gospel for to-day gives us a lesson of great refreshment. Last Sunday we were thinking about our Lord's first miracle at Cana, to-day we must go on to another great miracle which He worked two years later. We have not time to think of all that JESUS did. We are told that during all those two years wherever He went people came to Him in crowds. They wanted to hear Him speak, for His words were more wonderful than any they had ever heard, and they wanted to see the wonderful things that He did, so they followed Him everywhere.

Well, one day at the end of that time more than five thousand men, and a great many women and children besides, followed JESUS into a wilderness. It was not the wilderness where He was tempted, *but another* far away from that, in the north part of the country, in Galilee, near the sea of Tiberias.  *There were no people living there, and no shops or*

stores, no places where they could get food. They stayed there with JESUS all day, and the little food they brought with them was gone, and they could get no more. JESUS was very sorry for them, for they had come a long way, and would faint if they went home without food, so He told His disciples to feed them. But the disciples had no food either, so they did not know how to obey their Master.

At last one of them, called Andrew, remembered that he had seen in the crowd a little lad with a basket, and in it five barley loaves and two small fishes. Perhaps he was feeling hungry himself, and had peeped into the basket to see if there was anything there. I suppose the little lad had been sent on an errand by his mother, or his master, and seeing the crowd, had run after it; boys do sometimes run after crowds, don't they?

So Andrew told JESUS what he had seen, and JESUS told him to bring the boy. The boy must have been very glad to come.

And JESUS "took the loaves and fishes, and, looking up to Heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples to the multitude."

Now see what happened when JESUS blessed them. He broke them, but they did not get any smaller; there was always more to break, and each one remained as large as at first. And it was the same with the disciples; they went on breaking and giving away, but more seemed to come. And so it went on until the whole five thousand men and all the women and children had had as much as

they needed. "They were all filled; and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full."

What a wonderful power there was in our Lord's blessing! The disciples could not have done this alone. No; but He could do it, because He is the Son of God. He taught the people this when He looked up to Heaven, as the picture shows Him. He has one loaf in His hand, while the others and the fishes are in the basket at His feet, and He looks upward, teaching us that all power comes from thence, from God. He is blessing with the hands of a man on earth, but with the blessing of His Father in Heaven.

Here we may learn a very simple but very useful lesson. What ought we to do when we take our food? We ought to give thanks. Indeed we ought, for all our food comes from God, and JESUS CHRIST has set us this example. We call this sometimes "saying grace," and that is a good word to use, for it tells us what we really are doing. We say grace, that is, we ask God to send His grace upon our food; we ask a blessing on our food in the Name of God; or, as we may say, we bless our food in His Name.

This we should do always, wherever we may be and whoever is present. You should always before eating stand up, fold your hands, and say *your grace* reverently. Never mind who is there or who sees, what they say or think of you. Our Lord JESUS did not care what the people would

say. He did not mind what they thought. He did not stop to consider whether others would do the same. He did it because it was right. And so must you. If you have not been taught any other grace, you will find this a good one: "Bless, O Lord, these Thy good gifts to our use and us to Thy Service; for JESUS CHRIST's sake. Amen."

Now let us think a moment about the little lad whose bread and fishes JESUS took to bless for these people.

How he must have wondered! and oh, how glad he must have been! To think that the loaves and fishes out of his little basket could be used for such a wonderful work as this! He would never forget it all his life; and whenever he thought of it, it would fill him with joy to think that he, by God's blessing, had been the means of helping and giving joy to so many.

I have read of a sailor-boy who once brought home to his mother a beautiful plant from a foreign country. It blossomed splendidly, and she treasured it for his sake. One day a gentleman who was very skilful in raising plants saw it. He asked the mother to let him have it that he might make many out of it. At first she would not, but at last she let him take it on his promising to bring her one of the first that he got from it. He took it away, and divided and divided it again and again, and in a very little time he got three hundred plants from it. How that sailor-boy when he came home must have been astonished, and how

delighted to find that instead of only his mother he had helped to give three hundred people pleasure!

That was nice, was it not? but it was not nearly so grand or wonderful as this little boy's loaves and fishes which were blessed by JESUS CHRIST.

Children, do you see how even a little boy may help and comfort many if only JESUS blesses what he does? Never think you cannot do any good. Do what you can, and pray for a blessing. Your little works, your little self-denials, shall be multiplied by that blessing to help and comfort many, many others, and you yourselves shall be full of joy.

Now will you try and put last Sunday's lesson and to-day's lesson together, and find a greater lesson still for Refreshment Sunday?

Last Sunday our Lord did a great work with *Wine*, to-day with *Bread*. Bread and Wine. Surely you cannot help seeing what these are meant to teach us of. The wonderful work which JESUS does with Bread and Wine in the Blessed Sacrament of His Body and Blood.

Think who it is that blesses them. Some of you would say "GOD," and some "JESUS CHRIST," and some "the priest," and all would be right. Yes, indeed it is GOD that blesses, and He blesses in the Person of JESUS CHRIST, and JESUS CHRIST blesses by the hands and words of His Priest. The blessing comes from Heaven by the power of the Holy *Ghost*, Who dwells in the priest that he may be able to bless.

And think what the blessing is, what a wonderful power it has! Before the blessing there is but bread and wine, after the blessing that bread and wine is the Body and Blood of JESUS CHRIST. By the word of that blessing JESUS gives us His own Body and Blood "to strengthen and refresh our souls, as our bodies are strengthened and refreshed by the bread and wine."

This JESUS can do as easily as He could change the water or multiply the loaves, because He is the Son of GOD.

So, then, let Refreshment Sunday make you think of this, the highest and best refreshment of all, the true refreshment of our souls.

And it is good to think of it to-day. We are looking forward to Easter Day. It is time to gather up our resolutions, to make our self-examination, to pray, to be very much in earnest that we may be ready for our Easter Communion. You know that the Church tells us that every man, woman, boy, and girl who is confirmed should receive the Holy Communion on Easter Day. It would be sad indeed if any were absent on that day. No joy, no brightness, no true Easter feast without that. Let Refreshment Sunday remind us of it, that we may be ready. Keep a good Lent, then a happy Easter, and so, refreshed with the Food that JESUS gives, we can go on year after year until the great Easter when we shall all see our Lord, and never lose the joy any more, but be with Him for ever in Heaven.



JESUS CHRIST IS CROWNED.

S. Matt. xxvii. 29.

Passion Sunday.

(THE FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT.)

THE SUFFERINGS OF JESUS.

S. JOHN xix. 5.

TO-DAY, the Fifth Sunday in Lent, has been for many centuries called by the Church *Passion Sunday*, and this week that follows it *Passion Week*. Think for a moment what this means.

When we use the word "passion" in our common talk, we mean that a person who has been provoked by something has got very angry and lost control of himself, has lost his temper. But when we speak of religious things, especially when we speak of our Lord JESUS CHRIST, of course the word cannot mean this. You will remember that we use it in the Litany in church, "By Thy Cross and Passion, good Lord, deliver us." We see at once what it means there; it means *suffering*. And this is what it always means if we use it in speaking of JESUS CHRIST or His Church.

So to-day is Passion Sunday, and that is *Suffering Sunday*.

To-day is called by this name, because we are *coming very near* the end of Lent, and the Church *teaches us to begin to-day and think about the*

suffering of JESUS. All His life was full of sufferings, but they were gathered up in the last days before His Death on Good Friday. By beginning to think of His sufferings now we shall be better prepared to think rightly of His Death when Good Friday comes.

We will pass over all that happened during the year after the miracle of the loaves and fishes that we thought about last Sunday, and go on to-day to the last morning of our Lord's earthly life, Good Friday morning.

How different our picture is from some of those we have had during the last few months! At Christmas we had the picture of the Babe of Bethlehem, so peaceful and full of joy for us. Now we have the Babe grown into a Man, and all is sad and sorrowful to see.

JESUS CHRIST is in the hands of the Roman soldiers. The Jews went out last night to a quiet, lonely garden, where they had been told that JESUS often went to pray, and there they found Him at prayer. They took Him prisoner, and bound Him with cords, and led Him away to the high priest. The high priest hated JESUS, and would have killed Him, but he had no power to take away any one's life. So he sent JESUS bound to the Roman governor, and asked him to put Him to death.

We know the name of that governor, because we say it in our Creed: "Who was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate."

When the Jews had placed our Lord before

Pontius Pilate he asked what they wanted, and they all cried out at once, "Crucify Him ! crucify Him !"

But the Roman laws were just, and no one could be put to death until inquiry had been made to see if it was just and right, to see if he had done anything for which he was worthy to die. He could not be condemned until he had had his accusers face to face and had been allowed to answer for himself against the charges they made. So Pilate asked, "What evil has He done?"

When he said this they could give no true answer, for they had tried in every way, and could find no one, not even those who had known JESUS all His life, who could say that they had ever seen or heard Him do or say anything wrong. Indeed, it was because He was so good, so much better than they, that they hated and wished to kill Him.

But they must say something, so they said, "He had made Himself the Son of GOD, and for this He ought to die." Perhaps He ought, if He had said this when it was not true. But JESUS CHRIST could not *make Himself* the Son of GOD, He could not say that He was the Son of GOD when He was not, for He was the Son of GOD from all eternity, as the Nicene Creed teaches you, "THE ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON OF GOD, BEGOTTEN OF HIS FATHER BEFORE ALL WORLDS, GOD OF GOD, LIGHT OF LIGHT, VERY GOD OF VERY GOD, BEGOTTEN, NOT MADE, BEING OF ONE SUBSTANCE WITH THE FATHER, BY WHOM ALL THINGS WERE MADE : WHO FOR US MEN, AND FOR OUR SALVATION CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN, AND WAS INCARNATE BY THE HOLY

GHOST OF THE VIRGIN MARY, AND WAS MADE MAN."

So when JESUS said that He was the Son of GOD He only spoke the truth. Yet they wished to kill Him.

It would be just the same now. If our Lord were to come and live among us as Man, people would deny that He was GOD, and there are people living now who would rise up against Him and put Him to death. This is the reason why all those who wish to live like JESUS have to suffer trouble and sorrow in the world.

When Pilate heard what they said, and had himself examined JESUS, he knew he ought not to be killed, and so he did not want to crucify Him. He said, "I find no fault in Him." But still he wished to please the Jews if he could, and so he added, "I will therefore scourge Him and let Him go."

To scourge means to flog or beat, but in a much worse way than anything we can think of in these days. When the Roman soldiers scourged any one they took off all his clothes and flogged him with a whip made of leather straps with wires twisted into them, and with little leaden balls at the end with spikes in them, so that they might pierce and tear the flesh. Pilate thought that surely such a scourging as this might satisfy the Jews. But it did not; they cried out louder, "Crucify Him! crucify Him!"

Then the soldiers took JESUS and began to mock Him. They said if He was a King He must

wear a crown. So they got large, sharp, cruel thorns and twisted them together, and put them on His head, instead of the golden crown He had a right to wear. Then as kings have a sceptre they can hold in their hand as a sign of their power, they took a thin reed, a kind of bulrush, a thing of no strength or value, and put it in His hand. And then they bowed before Him, pretending to worship Him.

Pilate told the Jews to look at this, to "behold the Man" they wanted to kill. There He was, bound and suffering before them, surely they need not be afraid of Him, surely it did not matter if such an One did say He was the Son of GOD.

We know that all this made no difference, that JESUS took all this of His own accord, and in spite of His looking so poor and miserable He was the Son of GOD. We know that though they put on His head a crown of thorns He did not lose His glory, and so we see the glory in the picture around the thorny crown. The reed in His hands is worthless, but still those hands hold up the world. The hands are tied as if they feared He would strike them, but had He pleased He could have broken the cords, or even destroyed His enemies by His word. And so in spite of all the suffering, and wounds, and mockery we honour Him as GOD, and own Him as our King.

"Glory be to JESUS,
Who in bitter pains
Poured for me the Life-blood
From His sacred veins."

Our Blessed Lord bore all this suffering of His own Will. But He did not bear it for His own sake. All suffering comes from sin in some way or other ; if there had been no sin, there would have been no pain. But JESUS CHRIST had no sins. No, He bore all this for the sake of those who had sinned, and who would sin until the end of the world.

Think of that. He bore these things because of our sins. If no one had ever sinned, JESUS would never have suffered. If you and I had not sinned, He would not have had to suffer so much.

Do you remember that we saw our dear Lord lying in the manger at Christmas, and we knew that though so quiet and still His heart was glad. As man He was a little helpless Child, but as GOD He looked on through eighteen hundred years, and heard our carols, and saw our worship, and rejoiced.

So now before Pontius Pilate He looked on, and saw and heard all our bad deeds, and thoughts, and words, and oh, how they grieved Him ! He said, " My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." If we could count up all the sins committed by all the people in our own town, or even in our own church, all the sins of the little children and all the sins of the grown-up people, we could not live long enough to write them down. Then think what the number must be since the beginning of *the world* ! JESUS saw them all, and this made *Him* sorrowful ; it was for these sins He suffered *all that shame and agony*.

Ah, then, do not sin! Do not add to His sufferings! If you remembered this, you could not do wrong.

Think: every wrong thing I do with my hands helps to bind His hands. Every wrong thought I think is like a thorn in His crown. Every wrong word adds to the evil words He hears there. Every bad thing I do with my body adds to the pain of His scourging. Won't you try and think of this and be sorry for your sins?

And see how in all His suffering you can give Him joy. If He then looked on and saw one of you tempted to do some wicked thing, to lie, or steal, or say a bad word, and He heard you say, "No, I won't do it; I won't give JESUS pain," and every time you were tempted you kept on saying, "No, I won't; I won't do wrong," would it not make Him glad? Try, then, all through this Passion-tide, from now till Easter, to do nothing that would make JESUS suffer, but keep from sins and make Him glad.

If you only really thought that our dear Lord's sufferings were caused by your sins, how sorry you would be! and oh, how hard you would try by your love and obedience now to make up for all the evil you had done! Did you ever make any one you loved suffer? If so, did not you think you never could do enough to show your sorrow?

Let me tell you a story I once read in a book.

There were two sisters, one about fourteen, and *the other older*. One day the younger one was very

much put out with her elder sister because she would not do something she wanted her to do. She was in a naughty fit. Her sister asked her to bring her a match that she might seal a letter. She brought the match and struck it, but she was still so angry that she did not care how she did it. When she had lighted the candle she dashed down the match in a frenzy of temper, and did not look where it went. In a moment there was a fearful explosion. Her brother had brought home some chemicals. They were lying on the window-seat, and she had flung the match right on them. She was not hurt, but her poor elder sister was fearfully burnt. For a long time she lay in danger of death, and when she did get better she was a cripple for life. How terrible this was for the younger one who had done the harm! Oh, how she felt it! She could never be sorry enough.

Now what did she do? All the while her sister lay so ill she nursed her day and night. Nurse after nurse was fairly worn out, but this girl never failed, she was always there. And when her sister got better she gave herself up to her for life. A few years after the father died, and the two girls were left alone. The younger one then took a little house and moved her sister to it, and then went out teaching children, and worked from morning till night to support them both.

Now she had not meant to do all this harm to her poor sister; she was only cross; she had no *thought* of hurting her. But she felt that never, *never* could she do enough to show her sister how

sorry she was for that crossness and ill-temper which had been the cause of so much suffering.

You can find this story, and read all about these two sisters, if you like, in Miss Yonge's book called "The Clever Woman of the Family."*

Children, we have made the Son of God suffer by our crossness, and, worse than that, by our wilful sins. What can we do to show our sorrow? Will you let that girl I have told you of put you to shame? Will you not try by love and gentleness and obedience now to show that you do with all your hearts grieve for the sins which made Him suffer and made Him die.

"See from His head, His hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingling down ;
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown ?

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were an offering far too small ;
Love so amazing, so Divine,
Demands my life, my soul, my all."

* Chapter III., middle. (Macmillan & Co., London.)



JESUS CHRIST CARRIES HIS CROSS.

S. John xix. 17.

The Sixth Sunday in Lent.

(PALM SUNDAY.)

JESUS BEARING HIS CROSS.

S. JOHN xix. 17.

WE cannot have forgotten our lesson of last Sunday, when we saw our Lord JESUS CHRIST standing bound and crowned with thorns before Pontius Pilate and the Jews.

Pilate hoped that when the Jews saw our Lord looking so sad and suffering so much they would have pity on Him and let Him go. But they would not. The sight of JESUS and His sufferings only seemed to make them wish to see Him suffer more. They cried out louder and louder, "Crucify Him ! crucify Him !"

Now Pilate was a very bad man, and he had done many very wicked things. He had tried to keep these things secret ; and indeed, the Emperor of Rome, who had made him governor, did not know about them. This made him afraid of offending people, lest, if he did, they should go and tell of him. So now he was afraid of the Jews ; and when they kept on crying out that JESUS must be put to death, he at last gave way. He pitied our Lord very much himself—he knew that He had done *nothing* for which He ought to die ; but he was a

coward, he had a guilty conscience, he dare not do right now, and so he told the soldiers to take JESUS CHRIST away and put Him to death. Let us go with them.

The place of execution, where all people were put to death, was outside Jerusalem. It was a place called Calvary. They took JESUS, and bound Him, and led Him there. Think of our dear Lord being led all through the streets by the soldiers that all the people might see Him and think that He was a criminal, and was going to be put to death for His sins! How sad to think of!

But it was worse even than this.

We have heard that the Jews asked Pilate to crucify JESUS. That is, as you know and have often seen in pictures, to nail Him to a great wooden cross, and set the cross up in the air, that there He might slowly die.

This was the way in which the Romans generally executed people. It was thought a death of great shame, because slaves were killed so. They wanted to make it as shameful as they could, and so they always made the man carry through the streets the cross on which he was going to die. When people saw this they generally followed in a crowd, mocking the criminal, and taunting him with his crimes and punishment.

How different from our way now! We do all we can to spare prisoners. Even when they are

taken from one prison to another they are carefully shut up in a van that no one may see them. But no one thought of sparing JESUS CHRIST.

We must then look at Him to-day carrying the heavy cross on which He was to die, and going forth through the streets of Jerusalem. The cross was very heavy, for it was made of two large beams of wood strong enough to bear the weight of a man.

What a burden this must have been to our dear Lord! He had no rest the night before, but had gone through a terrible agony. All the morning He had been dragged from place to place, and He had been terribly scourged, so as to lose very much blood and become very weak. You remember how dreadful the Roman scourging was.

And so we see our Lord in our picture to-day. He seems quite exhausted, and as if He could scarcely bear the weight of the cross laid on Him. He is worn out, and hardly able to stand upright. He was so weak that the soldiers had to help Him along, and at last they were obliged to take a man out of the crowd and make him help JESUS to carry His load.

When we have a cross to bear, perhaps some pain, or sickness, or suffering, let us think of JESUS. See how He goes on His way quietly and patiently. How ready children are to cry out and complain of even a very little thing! If they remembered JESUS carrying His cross, they would bear pain better. Try and be patient and silent *for His sake*, that you may be like Him.

So this sad procession went on the way to Calvary. The soldiers and JESUS CHRIST, and all the multitude, and a few, a very few, of His friends weeping for sorrow. What a sorrowful sight it is! The road by which they went up the hill has ever since been called the "Sorrowful Way," or the "Way of Sorrows."

We should think of this during the days of this week. It is called Holy Week, because each day is made holy by the sufferings of our Saviour.

And as we think of this we must remember that JESUS carried this cross and bore all this pain because of His love for us. Then we shall learn to love Him too.

But we must not only stand and look, nor must we only love Him for His love to us. There is something more that we can do, something we ought to do.

If you had been in that "Sorrowful Way" when JESUS passed, would you have wished to go and lay something upon that cross to make it heavier? Oh no! You would rather, if you could, have lifted it up, or made it lighter, or helped Him to carry it. Now what is it that makes that cross so heavy to Him? It is not only the heavy wood, but something much, much worse than that. It is our sins. JESUS, in bearing that cross as He goes to die, is bearing all the weight of our sins. Every bad thought we think, every bad word we say, every bad thing we do, is heaped on Him there. "*The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*"

Think of that, and you will not be like those who stood by and did not care. You will not think that there is no harm in doing wrong and saying bad words if you remember the Cross of JESUS. Oh try, especially in this Holy Week, to be very, very sorry for all the sins which your dear Lord felt then, and try—oh, so earnestly!—never to sin more, that so you may make His burden lighter.

What is our Lord thinking of as He goes silently on His way? Perhaps He is saying Psalms to Himself. What is He looking at? I do not think He is looking at the cruel sharp stones that cut His feet as He goes. No! He is looking beyond them. He is looking at *you*. He is looking to see if you are going on sinning just as if He had not suffered, and caring nothing about Him, or if you are sorry for your sins for His sake, and are, in love to Him, trying your best to be good and sin no more. Oh, how beautiful to think of!—JESUS in His sufferings for me saw me loving Him and really trying to be good, and it made Him glad.

“JESUS, Lord! I am so sorry
I offended Thee before;
’Tis because of Thy great goodness,
I will then offend no more.”

JESUS feels all our sins; but there is one sin which I think grieves Him more than all as He goes on the “Way of Sorrows.”

It is the sin of those who are ashamed of Him and are afraid to suffer for His sake. He is not

afraid to suffer and to die. He is not ashamed to suffer openly, and bear all that comes upon Him because of our sins.

How sad if in His suffering He could see a boy or girl who was afraid to do right! How sad if one of you were ashamed to say a thing was wrong for fear you would be laughed at! How sad if you were ever ashamed of going to church, and of loving your church, or if you did not like to keep Holy Week and Good Friday because those round about you did not keep it!

Do you remember the story of that one of our Lord's disciples who was ashamed of his Lord and denied Him? It was S. Peter. He had courage enough to go as far as the high priest's house when the Jews bound JESUS and took Him there; but when some of the people there asked him if he did not know JESUS, and if he was not His disciple, he three times over denied it, and said that he did not know our Lord at all. When he did this JESUS turned round and looked at him, and he was, oh! so ashamed of himself, and so sorry, that he went out and wept bitterly. There is a story told of him which may be true; I do not say it is, but it *may be*. It is said that many years afterwards he was at Rome, and he heard that the Romans were going to kill him because he was a Christian. He was afraid again, and he got up and went away from Rome secretly, that he might escape and hide himself. On the way he met JESUS CHRIST Himself, looking so sad and sorrowful. He *knew Him* at once, and said, "Lord, whither goest

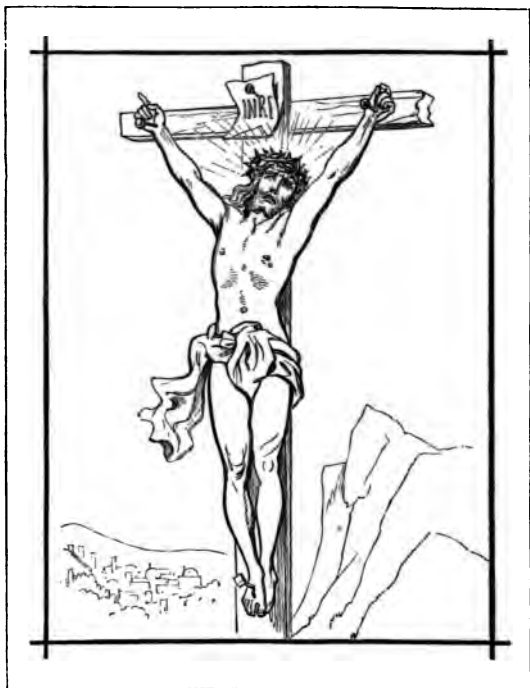
Thou?" and JESUS answered him, "I go to Rome to be crucified afresh." Then Peter knew that if he was ashamed and ran away, his Lord would be so grieved that it would be like crucifying Him again. So he turned back to Rome, determined to suffer bravely all that might come upon him for the sake of JESUS CHRIST.

Try, then, this Holy Week—

To bear any pain or trouble bravely and patiently for the sake of JESUS CHRIST.

To keep from every sin of thought, or word, or deed which would make His Cross heavier.

To remember always what He has done for you, and never, never to be ashamed of Him. Never be ashamed to own that you are a Christian, and that you are determined to live for JESUS CHRIST, Who carried His Cross for you.



JESUS CHRIST IS CRUCIFIED.

S. Mark xv. 25.

Good Friday.

JESUS CHRIST SPEAKS TO US FROM THE CROSS.

WE have watched our dear Lord JESUS CHRIST as He went patiently along the Way of Sorrows bearing His heavy cross, that cross so heavy because of our sins. We come now to see Him fastened to it, to see Him die.

When we know people are going to die we always wish to hear the last things that they say. To-day, then, we will stand by the Cross of JESUS to see Him die and listen to His words.

I.

The soldiers lay the cross flat upon the ground, and then they strip off His clothes and stretch Him on it. They take His gentle hands and place them upon the hard wood, and then—oh, how cruel!—they drive large nails through the hands, and so fasten them to the wood. They take those holy feet on which He went such long journeys for the good of men, and placing them one on another, they drive another long nail through them. So JESUS is nailed to the cross.

When this is done they lift the cross up high *into the air*, fixing the end into a hole they have

made in the ground. And now our dear Lord and Saviour hangs upon the cross between Heaven and earth, and we stand gazing upon Him.

But we must not only gaze ; we must mourn with Him.

“ O come and mourn with me a while ;
O come ye to the Saviour's side ;
O come, together let us mourn ;
JESUS our Love is crucified ! ”

While the soldiers nailed our Lord to the great cross He was patient and silent ; He only spoke once. Perhaps it was just as they laid Him on the cross, perhaps it was just when the cross was raised up. He spoke once, and His words were—

“ FATHER, FORGIVE THEM ; THEY KNOW NOT WHAT THEY DO.”

What wonderful words these are, children ! See, He forgave them first as Man with all His heart, and then He looked up and asked His Heavenly Father to forgive them also. While they were putting Him to death He pleaded for them ; the Son of God prayed for His murderers. He Who prayed was the Son of God.

Indeed, those soldiers did not know who He was ; they thought He was only a man ; “ had they known they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”

JESUS did not pray only for the soldiers ; He prayed for the chief priests who delivered Him up to death, and for the Roman governor who *condemned*. He prayed for all those who had *any share in His Death*.

These too did not know what they were doing. The priests knew, and Pilate knew, that He was the Son of GOD, but they did not know what this meant; they did not know what they were losing. How glad JESUS CHRIST would have been to bless them! How glad He would have been to fill their hearts with love if they would only have loved Him! All this they lost. Even while they were crucifying Him He was opening Heaven for them if they would only repent and be saved. They did not know all this.

But JESUS had pity on them all, and in the midst of His sufferings He prayed for them.

Sometimes, children, people are unkind to us. If they see us trying to do right, they laugh at us, perhaps in some way or another they make us suffer. A boy at school is laughed at for saying his prayers. A girl at home trying to help mother is made fun of. One trying to do work for others will be plagued; the work may be snatched away or spoilt. Boys have even been beaten and ill-used because they would not lie or swear.

Children, if any such things happen to you because you wish to do right, remember that you are suffering with JESUS CHRIST. But remember, too, that those who do these things do not know, or do not think, what they are doing. They think they are only tormenting some boy or girl who is, as they say, "so very particular;" they do not think that they are *teasing* a child of GOD. And they do not

know that when any of His children suffer JESUS CHRIST suffers in them. It is really the Son of GOD Who suffers.

And they do not know what a blessing they lose! Oh, if only they would be good, and not tease, but try to love and live for JESUS, how happy they might be!

Try, then, never to get angry, never answer back, never return unkindness for unkindness; but when any of these things, or things like them, are done to you because you love JESUS and want to live for Him, do as He did—forgive. And then pray His prayer, *Father, forgive them; they know not what they do.**

II.

Those who crucified our Lord JESUS CHRIST wished to make Him appear as bad as possible; so they took two wicked men and nailed them to two crosses, and put them up, one on each side of Him. When people saw them all hanging together they would think they were all three bad men. So “He was numbered with the transgressors.” We can fancy how the children passing by might say, “Oh, look!—one, two, three bad men, all crucified!”

These two men had been thieves, and had lived very bad lives. And they were just as bad

** In reading these addresses to children, it would be well, if possible, that they should sing a hymn, or verse of a hymn, between the sections.*

on their crosses as they had been before. People who have been very bad all their lives are not often different when they come to die. So when they heard the soldiers and chief priests mocking JESUS they joined in and mocked Him too. They mocked Him because He Who was so good was hanging there with them. They mocked Him because He was the Son of GOD, and they told Him to prove it by getting off His Cross and taking them down. "If Thou be the Son of GOD, save Thyself and us."

Our Blessed Lord took no notice of all this, but silently bore it, because it was His Father's Will that He should suffer.

After a while one of those two bad men began to think in himself that he had only a few hours to live, and that, after all, he was only getting the punishment he deserved. Then he felt how wrong it was to mock the good JESUS! So he first stopped himself, and then tried to stop the other one, asking him if he was not afraid of GOD now that he was going to die. Then he turned his head and tried to look at JESUS.

When any one was crucified by the Romans they generally wrote down what crime he had done, and put the writing over his head, that all might see that he suffered justly. But JESUS had done no wrong; there was nothing to write. Pilate, who condemned Him, knew this, and so he only put up His Name, JESUS OF NAZARETH, and added to it the title which in his heart he felt belonged to Him, "*THE KING OF THE JEWS.*"

The thief, repenting of his sin, and pitying the suffering Saviour, turned to Him, and there, over His Sacred Head, he saw the title, JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. What a joy came into his heart! Perhaps, after all, he might be forgiven. He spoke to JESUS; he dared not ask for anything; he knew he was not worthy of anything, so he only said, "*Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom.*"

What a great thing this was to do! Only think! In the midst of the priests and soldiers, hanging there on the cross, he separated himself from his bad companion, he confessed his sin, he accepted his punishment willingly, and before them all he declared that he believed in JESUS CHRIST the Son of God!

Then JESUS spoke. He had borne all before in silence, but His love came forth now. He did not keep the poor thief waiting for an answer; He did not promise a future reward, but

"TO-DAY SHALT THOU BE WITH ME IN PARADISE."

GOD always gives us much more than we ask for, far more than we ever expect to receive, and oh, so much more than we deserve!

Look at the poor thief. He was dying, and in great pain, but now his suffering was with JESUS, and JESUS promised him rest and peace in Paradise. He broke away from his friend, he was willing to give up his bad companion for JESUS' sake, and what did JESUS give him? He did not say, "You shall go to Paradise"—that would

have been a great deal ; but He said more, "To-day shalt thou be with *Me*." He would take him to be with Himself ! What would all the pain matter now ? What would it matter if his companion should reproach him ? He was going to be with JESUS ! And where was He to be ? In Paradise, where GOD's saints were waiting for JESUS to come. He would be with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, with Eve and Sarah and Ruth, and many, many more, and he would see and share in all their joy when JESUS came into their midst. What a wonderful change, to be with JESUS on His cross, and then to be with JESUS in Paradise !

Oh, let us learn to love JESUS more ! Let us look at Him as He hangs on the cross and know that He hangs there for us, and will bless us as He did this thief.

If you love Him, you will not be ashamed to confess your sin ; you will take willingly whatever punishment may come because of it ; you will be ready to give up the friendship of those who have led you into sin. Oh yes, if we love JESUS there is nothing we will not do in the hope that He will remember us when He comes into His kingdom.

III.

As JESUS hung dying upon the cruel cross there were only four friends who stayed by Him. His Mother ; His Mother's sister, who was also called Mary, and was the mother of James, who because *he was our Lord's cousin* is sometimes called His

brother ; and Mary Magdalene was there ; and S. John, the disciple whom JESUS loved. Only four out of all those who had known Him and followed Him ; only one out of all the multitudes He had healed.

His Mother was there !

“ At the Cross, her station keeping,
Stood the mournful Mother weeping,
Where He hung, the dying Lord.”

Oh, how great was her pain and sorrow ! it was like a sword piercing her soul. She had so lovingly and tenderly cared for Him, her Son, her very own, her only Son ! How often she had washed those gentle hands and feet she now saw pierced with cruel nails ! how often upon her breast had rested that dear head she now saw crowned with terrible thorns ! and now she could not even touch Him. Oh, if she might only wipe His brow once more ! But no ; there was nothing she could do but stand and see Him die.

“ Who, on CHRIST’s dear Mother gazing,
Pierced by anguish so amazing,
Born of woman, would not weep ? ”

And S. John was there, the beloved disciple—he who loved to sit next to JESUS at table, and to rest his head on JESUS’ bosom—he who had been with his Master in joy and sorrow for three whole years, and was the only disciple faithful to Him in this last and greatest woe—he was there, and he could do nothing, only stand and wonder.

S. Mary Magdalene was there, the poor woman to whom the Lord had been so good, and who

loved Him so much. He had cast seven devils out of her, and had forgiven all her sins, and she in her burning love had washed His feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. Oh, what would she have given if she might have drawn out the nails and bathed His feet now !

Does it seem strange that those who are trying to be good should have to suffer? See what JESUS teaches us. He seems to say, "Those who love Me most must suffer most; I will let them show their love by sharing My Cross." Do you ever wish that you could really suffer something with and for the dear Lord Who suffered so much for you?

And then He teaches us how to find comfort. When He saw His Mother and S. John standing by, He said to His Mother—

"WOMAN, BEHOLD THY SON,"

and then to S. John

"BEHOLD THY MOTHER."

And so He seems to tell them to find comfort in their sorrow by comforting one another. Do try and learn this lesson. See what it is. JESUS in His pain and sorrow yet can find thought to comfort His Mother and beloved disciple, and He bids them comfort one another.

Do not think only of yourselves when you are in pain or trouble. See if you cannot find some

one else who needs comfort, and as you comfort them you will be comforted yourself. Can you to-day find any one you can try to comfort for JESUS CHRIST's sake?

Perhaps a special lesson for children is to think of their mother whenever there is sorrow in the family. Think how much more heavy the sorrow is to her than you. If one of the little ones is very sick, how mother feels it! If father should be unkind, and not bring home any money, or if he should be out of work, how mother grieves if she has not food for her children! Boys and girls, JESUS CHRIST from the Cross speaks to you to-day, and bids you love and cherish and comfort your mother.

IV.

JESUS CHRIST is left alone to die, and the evil spirits are all round about Him. They were round Him to tempt Him in the wilderness; they were with Him to make Him sorrow in the Garden of Gethsemane; and they are here, if possible, to make His Death hard, to tempt Him even now to sin.

And so they make it quite dark. They make heavy clouds come over the sun and shut out its light. They seem as if they wanted to frighten JESUS, to make Him think that GOD has left Him *as well as man*. But JESUS knew that GOD was *there in the darkness*, and so He cried out in a *loud voice*—

"MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?"

Will you notice these words particularly? Although He seems to be *all alone in the dark*, He says *My GOD, My GOD*. Though all is dark GOD is still His GOD.

Children, never be afraid in the dark. Remember that GOD is there. If you are ever in the dark and some bad spirit tries to make you afraid, say earnestly and reverently to yourself, "My GOD, my GOD;" you will not be afraid then. Where GOD is you will be safe.

But there was another darkness which made JESUS cry out as He did, a much worse darkness than this outside; I mean the *darkness of sin*. JESUS CHRIST never did wrong, and yet it was sin that made Him suffer and die. He suffered for our sins, for your sins and mine.

When our Lord was hanging alone upon the cross, all our sins, all the sins of the world, were pressing on Him. Oh what a terrible burden! It was this great cloud of sin that came between Him and His Father's Face, and made Him feel for a time as if His Father had forsaken Him, and made Him cry so loud and sadly, "*My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?*"

Oh, if we only really thought of this we could not go on sinning! Think of JESUS all alone in darkness on the cross for your sins. How can you do anything more wrong? how can you do

wickedness and sin against Him, your Saviour and your GOD?

We must think how this suffering of JESUS helps us when we have sinned.

Perhaps some of you can remember some time when you had done wrong. You had been bad at school, or at home, and had been punished; or you had kept what was wrong a secret and were afraid to tell; or perhaps you had bravely confessed a fault and taken punishment willingly. And this sin was heavy on your soul. You kept thinking about it. And then you tried to pray, and you could not; it seemed as if the words would not come, or it seemed as if the sin was so bad that GOD was gone far away and would not hear. You were all alone, and afraid because of your sin.

Now if you ever feel like this, think of JESUS on the cross, and cry out, as He did, "My GOD, my GOD." Though you can't see Him, He is not far away; though you have sinned, He is still your GOD, and He will hear your cry. He has not forsaken you though it may seem so. In all His suffering the finger of the Saviour is pointing to Heaven.

He says to you when you are in trouble or sorrow of any kind, but especially when you are sorry for your sins, when you are so sorry that you can scarcely speak a word, look up to Heaven and cry, "My GOD, my GOD," and you will find all will be well.

V.

JESUS CHRIST has now been hanging on the cross more than three hours, perhaps nearly six. During a great part of this time the burning sun has been upon His head. His wounds are very painful, and He has lost much blood. He is very faint and thirsty. Looking still up to Heaven, He speaks two words—

“ I THIRST.”

Don't you think it is nice to know that our dear Lord JESUS was truly a Man ; that He really could suffer as we do ; that He really could be thirsty ? It does seem so much more certain that He can feel for us and help us. Perhaps this was one reason why He spoke the words ; He wanted us to know that we really can trust Him. Oh, how He loves us !

Will you notice, too, that He only said the words *once*, and then He waited ? He did not tease and fret about it ; He asked and waited. Perhaps some of us might learn a little lesson here. There are some children who don't do like this. They go on asking and worrying every one till they get their wishes. Learn gentleness and patience !

He asked, and then He waited. And one of the soldiers—I should like to know his name—took a sponge and dipped it in some vinegar he had for his own use, and put it upon a rod, and put it up to our Lord's lips. That was good, was it not ? I like to think of that one act of kindness amid so much cruelty and suffering.

But I think our Lord's words mean something more than that He was thirsty for something to drink.

You know that sometimes when people are very anxious to have something they say, "I thirst for it." People who want very much to be good are said to "hunger and thirst after righteousness." There must have been something that JESUS very much wanted, and He thirsted for that. What was it?

He came into the world, and His Name was called JESUS, because He would save His people from their sins. And all through His life He was calling people to come to Him that they might be saved. This is what He was thirsting for—the salvation of souls. Think, children, He was thirsting for you. Hanging on the cross He looked on and on through all these years, and He saw the children listening to or reading these words, and He longed for them; He longed to have these children—you, dear children—to have you for His very own.

The soldier satisfied His natural thirst. Don't you think we ought to try to satisfy this thirst too? How will you do it? You must give yourself to Him. Think of that! Every boy and girl really giving himself or herself to JESUS, really trying to be good for His sake, really remembering that we belong to Him and must live for Him, is *doing* something to satisfy the thirst of JESUS. Yes, every prayer, every good thought and wish, every good resolution kept, helps in

this. JESUS thirsted, and He looked on and saw who of you would keep a good Lent and Holy Week, who would deny themselves for Him, who would come and worship Him on Good Friday. He saw that some would remember Him; that all He did would not be in vain; that some children would love Him; so as He thirsted "He saw of the travail of His soul, and was satisfied."

How joyful to think that I to-day can be a little comfort to my dear Lord in His suffering!

" My God, I give myself to Thee,
Thine only, ever Thine to be ! "

VI.

It is getting near to three o'clock now on that first Good Friday afternoon, and the time is very soon coming when JESUS CHRIST will die. He knows this, and He speaks again—

" IT IS FINISHED. "

What do these words mean? He does not tell us, but they sound as if they were meant to make us glad. What was finished then?

The *sufferings* of JESUS were finished. In thinking over and praying over Good Friday as we have been doing, I am always glad when we come to these words. It is so sweet to think that all our dear Lord's sufferings have come to an end—all these sad hours He has been hanging weary upon the cross. He has been mocked, and scourged, and spit upon, and nailed to the hard wood, but

now all is over. The sufferings of to-day and the sufferings of His whole life are ended. JESUS CHRIST will suffer no more.

“Glory be to Jesus,
Who in bitter pains
Poured for me the Life-blood
From His sacred veins.”

His *temptations* were finished too. We all remember how for forty days and nights JESUS was tempted in the wilderness, and He Himself tells us He was tempted all His life long. But now He will be tempted no more.

Perhaps the worst temptation was that through which He had just passed. Was it not hard to hear them say, “If Thou be the Son of God, come down from the cross that we may believe,” and to know that He could come down, and yet to stay there and die? If one of you had been nailed there and could have come down, do you think you would have stayed there five minutes? Think how joyfully the blessed angels would have come if He had called them! How tenderly they would have taken off that thorny crown, and drawn out those cruel nails from His sacred hands and feet! But no; He would not call them; He would not come down. JESUS had stood firm in all other temptations, and He would be firm in this last and greatest of all. So He could say of His temptations, “It is finished.”

Children, let us learn from JESUS CHRIST to be *patient* in enduring temptation, to bear all that *GOD* wills us to bear. What a joy it will be when

all our temptations are over, and, like our dear Lord, we can say, "*It is finished*" !

And JESUS had finished all His *work*. Remember that He said these words when He was *dying*. He must then have looked back through His whole life. How wonderful, to be able to look back over a whole life and see nothing left undone !

What was His work ? He says He came to do His Father's Will, and now He can look back and say that He has done it, and done it perfectly. His Father willed that He should be born a Babe at Bethlehem ; that He should live as a Boy at Nazareth ; that He should be baptized in Jordan ; that He should be tempted in the wilderness ; that He should go about for three years healing the sick and doing good to all, and yet be despised and rejected ; and, last of all, that He should die upon the Cross. And all this JESUS did because it was His Father's Will.

How glad He must have been, even in His sufferings, to be able to say this ! You have heard of the little choir-boy of whom, after his death, it could be said, "He never disobeyed his mother." And should we not like—oh, how good it would be !—if when you come to die you could say, "I have done my Heavenly Father's Will ; I have obeyed my parents ; I have done all my work well ; I have followed the teaching of my priest ; I have tried to be like JESUS CHRIST ; and now, like Him, I can say, '*It is finished*'" ?

There is one thing which so many of us leave undone—we put off being sorry for our sins. Perhaps it is something we don't like to think of, perhaps something it would be very hard to confess, perhaps something we don't like to confess, because if we did we should have to try to do better, and that would be very hard. But even this JESUS had done. He had finished all the sorrow, not for His own sins, for He had none, but for all our sins, which He was bearing. And if we want to be able to die like Him, we must do this too. Don't let us put off thinking about what we have done wrong. But to-day, this Good Friday, before Easter Day comes, let us see that we are truly sorry, and truly asking God for forgiveness. You know that all our bearing pain and temptation, all the work we can do, all these will be of no good when we come to die unless we can say of our *sorrow for sin*, as well as of all besides, "*It is finished.*"

VII.

It is just three o'clock, and JESUS CHRIST has finished all that His Father gave Him to do; there is only one thing left, and that is *to die*. Think of JESUS CHRIST dying.

How He must have wanted to die! I have seen men die, and I have known men who knew *they were* going to die and did not want to; they *prayed* that they might live a little longer. But ~~they~~ *we* were men who had not finished their work.

There were so many things left undone, so much sin to be sorry for, they wanted a little more time to finish what they ought to have done long before.

It was not so with our Lord ; He had done all, and He longed now to die.

But the Jews could not kill Him. They could scourge and crucify Him, but they could not *make* Him die. He was the Son of God, and He came to lay His life down of Himself ; no man could take it from Him. And He showed this by the way in which He died.

When He knew that all things were accomplished, that His Father had nothing more for Him to do in this world, He looked up to Heaven, and cried with a loud voice—

“FATHER, INTO THY HANDS I COMMEND MY
SPIRIT :

and when He had said this, He bowed His head and gave up the ghost.”

He had been an obedient Son, and now there was no fear, no shrinking from death ; He was quite sure of His Father’s care and love ; He could bow His head as if He were resting it upon His Father’s Breast, and give His Spirit forth into His Father’s keeping.

Think of some good child who has all day been quick and hard at work, trying to please its parents and do all they wished. The day is over, and the little one comes and gets into mother’s lap, and places *her* head on mother’s breast : “Mother, *I’m tired ; I have done all you told me ; I have*

tried to be good, and now I am so tired I must go to sleep ; you will take care of me." And so with her head on mother's breast, and mother's arms around her, she closes her eyes and goes to sleep. So did JESUS CHRIST die.

How beautiful it would be to be able to die as JESUS did ! I remember a long time ago a poor woman dying. She was very peaceful though she suffered dreadful pain, and she seemed ready to die. She told me that many years before her clergyman had preached upon the death of JESUS, and had said how good it would be to die as He did. And she began to get ready. Every night she looked back over the day to see what was left unfinished, and tried to be very sorry for her sins, and then she laid herself down in bed with her Lord's last words upon her lips, " Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit." So now when the end was come, and I had given her her last communion, and prayed with her for the last time, there was nothing left for her to do, she could lie down in peace to die, as she had lain down every night in her life, commending her spirit into her Father's hands. And so she died as JESUS did.

We must learn not to be afraid to die ; we must learn to long to go to GOD.

The Spirit of JESUS went out of His Body and left that poor bruised Body hanging upon the cross, but it was not lost. He went to Paradise ; His Spirit went to the spirits of the blessed dead, who were waiting for Him. What joy there was

when He came there ! Adam and Eve, and Sarah and Ruth, Joseph, Zacharias, S. John Baptist, the Wise Men who came from the East, and the little children who died at Bethlehem, all gathered round Him with joy. What joy to live for GOD here and to go to be with GOD there !

And, children, this must be *our* joy. Let us this Good Friday resolve so to live like JESUS CHRIST that we may die like Him ; and more than that, so to live that when we die we may go to our rest with Him, that when the Resurrection, the great Easter Day, comes, we may rise with Him and live with Him for evermore. "Those that sleep in JESUS will GOD bring with Him."

" Safe in the arms of JESUS,
Safe on His gentle breast,
There by His love o'ershaded
Sweetly my soul shall rest."

Easter Day.

JESUS CHRIST RISES FROM THE DEAD.

S. LUKE xxiv. 6, 7.

TO-DAY is a day of great joy. We must have felt this as soon as we awoke. We saw it as soon as we came to church this morning. How different the church looks to-day from what it did the last time we were in it! Then all we saw made us think of sad and sorrowful things, now all is bright, and speaks of joy.

And all this joy is because JESUS CHRIST is risen from the dead.

On Good Friday afternoon we learned how JESUS died, and we sorrowed over the sins which caused His Death.

After He was dead His friends came and took His poor bruised and wounded Body down from the cross. They took It down so tenderly and lovingly, and wrapped It up in fine linen, putting myrrh and spices with It to preserve It. Then they laid that Body they loved so much in a new tomb, in which no one had been buried before, and rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb. When they had done all that could be done they went home very sorrowful, and yet glad that at the last they had

been able to do a little for their dear Lord JESUS. So the Body of JESUS rested in the grave.

But the Soul of JESUS was not there: that was gone. His Soul was gone to Paradise, that is, to the place of departed spirits. There, in that world of spirits, many were waiting and longing for Him. Adam and Eve, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Joseph, David, and all the prophets who had spoken of His coming, all were there expecting. Oh, what joy when He came among them and told them that His work for them was done, that He had died to save them!

We do not know exactly what JESUS did in that place of spirits. We are told that "He went and preached to the spirits in prison." What a wonderful preaching that was! How they gathered round to listen! No one got tired there, no one went to sleep there, of that we may be quite sure.

But this was not all He did. It had been said before He came that He should set free those that were bound. And this He did. He set those souls free! Satan, the prince of that world of spirits, had had them under his power so long, but he should have them no more; JESUS came there to set them free. He set them free and gave them life.

The joy of Easter began in Paradise.

But JESUS did not stay long there. His Body lay in the grave just long enough to show that He was *really dead*. His Soul remained in the place of spirits long enough to do His Father's Will.



When He could say there, as He said before He died on earth, "It is finished," He came back. His Soul came back to His Body, His Body came to life again, JESUS rose from the dead.

Now we know indeed that He was GOD. We have believed it all the time, because GOD said so. And we have seen the miracles that He did. But this is the greatest miracle of all, so great that the Bible says, "He was declared to be the Son of GOD with power by the resurrection from the dead." If you were asked, "How do you know that JESUS is GOD," you might say, "Because on the third day He rose again from the dead," and you could give no better answer.

This is why for more than eighteen hundred years the Church has kept Easter Day. Easter Day tells us that JESUS CHRIST is the Son of GOD, and that He has risen from the dead.

What a glorious sight His Resurrection must have been! But no one saw it except the angels. This is why we have no picture to-day. None can tell what the Resurrection was like, for no man saw it. The soldiers who were watching the grave saw a glorious angel, so beautiful that they nearly died of terror. What, then, must the glory of JESUS have been! We cannot picture it, and indeed we do not need a picture to-day; our hearts are full of joy. Our dear Lord will never suffer any more. He will never be hungry nor tempted again. His enemies will not be able to scourge Him or crucify Him. He has borne all that once, but now He is out of their power. He is risen from the dead—

“ He Who on the cross a Victim
For the world’s salvation bled,
JESUS CHRIST, the King of glory,
Now is risen from the dead.”

The spirits of the departed rejoiced with Him, the blessed angels rejoiced when they saw Him come forth from the tomb, and we rejoice with them, and lift up our hearts and voices to worship JESUS risen from the dead—

“ Accept, O glorious risen King,
The homage that we pay ;
Let it ascend the starry sphere
This happy Easter Day.”

The angels saw JESUS rise ; and if you had been there, and GOD had let you see Him too, you would indeed have seen a wonderful sight.

For JESUS did not rise alone. He went to Paradise to set free the saints who were bound, and when He came back He brought them with Him. We are not told who they were that rose with Him ; we are only told that “ many bodies of the saints that slept arose, and came out of their graves, after His Resurrection.”

That must have been a glorious sight to see. JESUS going first, and all these rejoicing saints following Him, and all the blessed angels around. Think of the joy of those who rose with JESUS on that first Easter Day—

“ Devouring depths of hell their prey
At His command restore ;
His ransomed hosts pursue their way
Where JESUS goes before.”

We are glad when we hear of this, because we know that what JESUS did for those saints He will do for us. We look forward to the day when we shall rise again.

JESUS CHRIST is called the "Firstfruits from the dead." Where we get firstfruits we know that others are to follow. You know how when the cold of winter is passing away we begin to look out for the birds coming back again, and when we see one swallow how glad we are! We know then that more will soon come; winter is gone, summer will soon be here. So, too, when the snow is beginning to melt perhaps we see one little flower beginning to show itself. How we wish the snow to be all gone that all the other beautiful flowers may come out and make the whole earth beautiful!

"The Spirit of Him Who raised up JESUS from the dead will also quicken our mortal bodies." That is, GOD will bring our bodies to life again. We must be thinking about this and looking forward to it, because it will help us in our life now. We want to live like JESUS our Lord, and we want to be able to die like Him, commending our spirit into our Father's hands. We must remember what is beyond all this. We are to rise again. How glad we shall be then! There will be no more pain, no more sorrow; we shall not suffer any more persecution or trouble for the sake of JESUS CHRIST, but we shall be perfectly like Him and share in His joy.

Will not that be beautiful? It ought to help you much to think of this. You can bear pain, *for the time is coming when there will be no more*

pain. You can endure trouble for your Lord's sake, for it will not last for ever, and will end in joy. You will do your best to keep from sin, because you would not like anything to prevent your being like JESUS CHRIST when you rise again from the dead. When any pain or trouble comes, or when you are tempted to sin, say, "I BELIEVE IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE DEAD," and you will find your heart grow strong and brave to bear all and wait that you may be like JESUS CHRIST.

There was once a little girl whose father went away into a distant country. Before he went he gave her clothes enough to last until his return, and he left her in the care of some distant relatives. He was gone a long, long time, much longer than she expected. Her relatives got tired of keeping her, and used to treat her very cruelly, because they said she cost them so much. They made her do all kinds of hard and dirty work. Her clothes got shabby and too small, and they would give her no more, but only laughed at her looks. When she talked of her father they laughed and said he would never come back. Altogether her life might have been very sad ; but it was not, for she was always bright and cheerful. Whatever they said she answered cheerfully ; or if she could not do that, she said nothing. She did all her work well. She wore her shabby clothes as gladly as if they had been the most beautiful new silks. She did all this, and why? Because she knew her father would come, and then all would be different ; *he would change it all.*

At last he came, and oh, what a change it was ! They hardly knew her now. When she had proper clothes on they saw that she had grown almost to a woman, and was tall and beautiful. Her face, which had so long been pleasant with smiles, was now sweeter than any her friends had ever seen before. All her toil had made her only the better able to help her father in the new home to which he took her. In after years she would look back, and sometimes she would say to her father, "Oh, how long you were away ! I wondered when you would come, though I knew I could trust you. Now and then, when I had so much to bear, I was tempted to think whether it would not be better to be dead. But now I am glad. And oh, father, you have made such a difference in my life, I cannot tell you ! It has been like a resurrection, like life from the dead."

Indeed, children, none of us know what the change and joy will be when JESUS comes to raise us from the dead and take us to our new home in the Kingdom of Heaven. Try and live always remembering the Resurrection.

" Save us, Lord, from sinning,
Watch us day by day,
Help us now to love Thee,
Take our sins away ;

Then when Thou shalt call us
To our heavenly home,
We will gladly answer,
' Saviour, Lord, we come.' "



S. MARY MAGDALENE AT THE SEPULCHRE.

S. John xx. 11.

The First Sunday after Easter.

(LOW SUNDAY.)

S. MARY MAGDALENE.

S. JOHN XX. II.

TO-DAY we keep what is called in the Church the "Octave of Easter." Some of you who read this will know that in music, when we have struck seven notes in order, we find that the eighth or octave note is the same as the first, only higher or lower in the scale. So to-day, being the eighth day after Easter Day, the Church bids us strike the same note again. We are still to think of Easter and Easter joy.

It is for this reason that to-day is called Low Sunday. It is a kind of lower or lesser Easter. Of course though we think of the same things our joy cannot be so great as it was on Easter Day itself.

We will think to-day about some of the things which happened just after our Lord rose from the dead, especially about what happened to one particular person.

After our Lord JESUS CHRIST had died, two of *His friends* and disciples, Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathæa, went and took His Body down from

the cross, having got leave from Pilate to do so. When they had taken It down they wrapped It in fine linen and laid It in a tomb belonging to Joseph, a tomb hewn out in a rock in a beautiful garden.

This was not the same Joseph, the faithful steward, about whom we learned before. That Joseph had been dead many years. It is nice to think of one faithful Joseph taking care of our Lord when He was a helpless Infant, and another caring for His helpless dead Body. It will be a joy to them when they meet in Heaven.

Some holy women went to see JESUS buried. They had loved Him in His life, and loved Him still though He was dead. We are told the names of three of them—Mary Magdalene, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Salome, and perhaps Joanna was another. They all went to do what they could for His burial, and to see where He was laid.

They were not able to do much, because it was late on Good Friday evening, and very near the Sabbath. The Sabbath amongst the Jews began on Friday evening, and on it they were not allowed to do any work ; they could not touch a dead body. So when they had seen JESUS buried they went home.

At home there was something they could do ; they could get ready for Sunday morning. On Sunday morning, it being the first day of the week, they would be able to go again and wash the Body of JESUS and anoint It and embalm It with spices according to their custom ; they did not wish to

leave anything undone that they could do to show their love for Him ; they did not know or think that He would be risen and not need their care. So on Friday evening, before the rest of the Sabbath began, they prepared their spices and ointments ready for the loving work they wished to do.

Let us stop for a moment and think about this. Was it not a good idea, children, to be ready beforehand ? Suppose they had left all till Sunday morning, what a hurry and confusion they might have been in !

I wonder if we are all as wise. Sometimes children have lessons to prepare for Monday morning. Do you try to get them done on Saturday, or leave them till Sunday or Monday morning ? Some children leave school on Friday afternoon, play all Friday evening, and play all day Saturday, then when Saturday evening comes they are tired and go to bed. Sunday comes, and they are thinking about lessons all day ; perhaps they can't come to church, or they can't be quiet and comfortable at home with father and mother on Sunday evening, because they must learn those lessons for Monday. Be wiser than this. Finish off your lessons on Friday if you can, that you may play on Saturday and be happy on Sunday ; at least finish them on Saturday night. Don't forget this.

Of course we all know that Sunday is not the Sabbath Day. Saturday was the Jews' Sabbath, and there is no Sabbath now. But Sunday is the *Lord's Day*, called so because on it JESUS rose

from the dead, and we ought to keep it for Him, and not do anything on it which would spoil its happiness.

There is another preparation I should like to say a little about. I mean preparing for Sunday morning itself.

These Holy Women got up early on Sunday morning, and had prepared themselves to go and care for the dead Body of JESUS. There are some who do something like this now. They do not go to dress our Lord's *dead* Body, but they go to receive HIS LIVING BODY. Yes, early every Sunday morning there are some who go to God's House—the Church—that there they may receive the Body and Blood of JESUS CHRIST—not dead now, but living by the power of the Holy Spirit, and by that same Spirit given to them to be the food of their souls. We should all do this. Even the youngest child should look forward and long for the time when he or she can come early every Sunday morning to receive the Body of JESUS CHRIST.

But then we should prepare. We should not come to Holy Communion without getting ready. Those of you who have Books of Devotion will remember that you are told to begin to prepare on Friday evening at the least. It is better to begin sooner, but do not do less in coming to your Living Lord than those good women did when they came to seek His dead Body.

So, very early on Easter Day, Mary Magdalene and the other Holy Women came to the sepulchre

where JESUS was laid. We know that He was not there, for He was risen; but she did not. As she came she wondered who would roll the stone away for them, for it was very heavy.

But when she got there it was already rolled away by an angel, and JESUS was gone. The stone was not rolled away to let JESUS rise, for He rose and passed through the stone; it was rolled away to show that He was gone.

When Mary Magdalene saw this, she ran back to Jerusalem and told the apostles; and Peter and John ran quickly to the sepulchre and found that what she said was true. They remembered what JESUS had said, and knew that He was risen from the dead, and they went home rejoicing.

But Mary Magdalene did not understand; so when they were gone she remained all alone by the tomb weeping. We see her in our picture. She seems to have put down upon the ground the jar in which she had brought her spices, and she stands weeping by it as if her heart would break because she cannot find the Body of JESUS. Poor Mary! she does not know how soon she will be comforted.

She wept for His dead Body. I wonder if we are all as sad when we cannot go to Holy Communion to find our Living Saviour.

She stood there weeping. She thought the enemies of JESUS had come and broken open the tomb and taken the Body away. Oh, how cruel it seemed! To think that even when He was dead they could not suffer Him to rest in peace.

And perhaps she wished she had loved her Lord more while He was with her. She had loved Him very much, and because of that great love JESUS had forgiven all her sins. But those who love most always feel how little their love is compared with their Lord's love for them. She wept because she had not loved Him more. We might think of this ourselves. How sad it would be if some day when it was too late we had to think, "I did not love Jesus enough when I could. Oh, how I wish I had loved Him more!"

And it may be just the same with our earthly friends. Many years ago I remember a little boy whose mother died suddenly. They tried to comfort poor little Eddy by telling him he would see her again some day. But he could not be comforted. He lay all day on his bed and sobbed and sobbed. "Oh, I wish I had loved her more! I didn't think mother would die so soon. Why didn't I love her more?"

Mary stood there weeping. Perhaps as she wept she thought of her sins. JESUS had forgiven them, but perhaps she had not been sorry enough, she had forgotten all about them, and so this great trouble had come to remind her of them; it was a punishment. I do not know that she thought this; but it may have been so, for good people often do think of their sins when trouble comes. It makes them so much more sorry.

But while she stood there weeping JESUS was *near*. He still loved her, loved her all the more

for her sorrow. And so He came quietly and stood near her.

She felt that some one was near, and turned towards Him, but her eyes were so full of tears, and the Resurrection had made JESUS so beautiful, that she did not know Him. JESUS spoke to her and called her by name, "Mary!" Ah, then she knew. Never could she forget the voice which told her to go in peace, her sins were forgiven; the voice that she had loved to listen to when it spoke of God and Heaven. She knew the voice, and all her sorrow was turned into joy, and she fell down on the ground and worshipped JESUS CHRIST risen from the dead, her Lord and her God.

JESUS always comes to those who seek for Him. Sometimes He keeps them waiting, but He is sure to come. Do not forget this!

I know that it sometimes seems to children as if JESUS was gone away from them. They feel as if they can't pray, as if they can't be good, as if things and people were so bad round about them that JESUS could not be there. I have heard of a little boy who, when he was told to be good and please God, said, "Why, look at uncle, and look at So-and-so, and So-and-so," naming many who lived bad lives; "I don't think God can be anywhere round about here."

Yes He is, though we cannot see Him. JESUS is quite near us. Never give up trying to do right, never listen to any one who tells you that JESUS does not love you nor care for you. You do love Him, and because you love Him you will try to

please Him. And if you ever do wrong, be very sorry, and then JESUS will speak in your heart and comfort and help you. He has said—

“I LOVE THEM THAT LOVE ME, AND THEY THAT
SEEK ME EARLY SHALL FIND ME.”

“ There’s a crown for little children
Above the bright blue sky,
And all who look for JESUS
Shall wear it by and by ;
A crown of brightest glory,
Which He will then bestow
On those who found His favour
And loved His Name below.”

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S. PETER.

S. John xxi. 15-17.

The Second Sunday after Easter.

S. PETER.

S. JOHN xxi. 18.

OUR Lord JESUS CHRIST remained upon the earth forty days after His Resurrection. These must have been days of great joy to His apostles. Don't you think it must have been nice to have Him again going about among them? We keep forty days of sorrow in Lent before Easter, and now we have forty days of joy after Easter.

During these forty days I want you to think of some of those to whom our Lord especially talked after He rose from the dead.

Last Sunday you learned about our Lord coming to S. Mary Magdalene. To-day we will think about S. Peter. I suppose you have already found out by the keys he carries that that is a picture of S. Peter.

Peter loved JESUS CHRIST very dearly, so dearly that he said he would be ready to die with Him. He promised that whatever troubles came upon his Lord he would share in them, and if everybody else were to go away and leave Him he would not do so.

It was very brave of him to make these pro-

mises, but he forgot one thing. I think you know what that was. He did not ask JESUS to help him. He did not think of this, and once when JESUS reminded him of it he was so tired and sleepy that he went fast asleep, and forgot to say his prayers at all.

If he did not pray, it was not any wonder that he did not keep his promises, was it? No one ever keeps his promise to be good if he does not say his prayers. Satan is sure to come and make him break it.

So Peter went to sleep, and the soldiers came and took JESUS, and bound Him, and led Him to the high priest's palace.

When Peter found this he followed after them, but then he had not prayed, and so he was afraid. He did not want to be seen. He went and mixed himself up with a number of soldiers and servants round the fire, thinking no one would notice him. But he *was* noticed.

You know how differently people from different parts of a country pronounce the same words. When the servants talked to Peter they found out that he came from Galilee, where Nazareth was, where JESUS had been brought up. So they asked him if he knew JESUS, and, dreadful to think of, he said *No*! A second time they asked him, and again he said *No*! When they asked him a third time he lost his temper, was very angry, and swore at them, and declared he did not know what they were talking about.

All this was very sad, and it all happened because

he did not pray. He had better not have gone to sleep. Don't you think so?

But JESUS CHRIST did not forget him. He turned round where He was standing before the high priest and looked at Peter. Just then a cock near by crowed. Peter saw JESUS look, and heard the cock, and he remembered that JESUS had warned him that he would deny Him three times before the cock crowed twice. Oh, he was so sorry! He would have given anything to be able to undo what he had done. But, you know, he could not do that. What could he do? He could not stay near JESUS now. He went away alone, outside Jerusalem, and there, kneeling down in some lonely place, he hid his face and wept. To think that he who loved his Lord so much could have been such a coward and denied Him!

But JESUS CHRIST still loved Peter, and because He sees all things He saw him there, and He saw his heart too, and saw that he was really and truly sorry for his sin.

And so, early on Easter Day, soon after JESUS had seen Mary Magdalene, He went and found out Peter. We do not know when or where He found him. I wonder if Peter was more glad or sorry to see JESUS. He must have been glad to know that JESUS was risen, but he could hardly have dared to look in His face. Suppose that you had said one day about some one you really loved that you did not know them or care anything about them, and you knew that your friend had found out what you said, how would you feel when you

met your friend again? Would it not be dreadful at first?

We do not know what Peter said, but we may be quite sure that he knelt down and confessed his sin, and that our dear loving Lord spoke words of absolution and comfort. Perhaps He said, "Thy sins be forgiven thee, go and sin no more."

Peter gives us a very good lesson for Easter-tide. See, children! You have kept a good Lent, and you have tried to be sorry and put away your sins, and perhaps you think you will never do as you did before. Boys and girls often think so. They come and make their confessions; they are real sorry, and they promise that they never will, they are certain that they never, never will, do such bad things again.

It is right to be sorry and to make this promise, but now don't go away and forget to pray; don't forget to ask JESUS to help you; don't trust in yourselves. Promise with all your heart, and pray that your dear Lord will help you to keep the promise.

Peter never forgot his sin. We are told that he never in all his life heard the cock crow without shedding tears of sorrow for what he once did.

It is for this reason that you see a gilded cock on the top of almost every church tower in England. It is to remind you of Peter's promise, and of how he broke it because he did not pray. When you see the cock shining in the sun, think

of your promises to be good, and pray that you may never break them.

We see now how JESUS showed His love in forgiving Peter ; but He did more than this.

You know that Peter was one of the twelve apostles; that JESUS had chosen him to go and teach and preach and baptize, and help to found His Church. Now don't you think it very likely that after Peter had committed this dreadful sin he must have thought that he never could be an apostle again. How glad he was to find himself restored to his place !

But then, others had heard him deny JESUS, and all the other apostles knew it. What would they say ? Would they forgive him and take him back ? His Lord meant that they should, and so He lovingly came and put him right with them.

Some days after Easter Peter and six others had gone fishing, and when they came back they found that JESUS was waiting for them on the shore, and had provided a fire and food for them. After they had eaten, JESUS called Peter to Him, and there, before the other six, He told him that he was to feed His lambs, to feed His sheep. By this the others knew that Peter was forgiven and taken again into favour, and that he was still to be an apostle in the Church of JESUS CHRIST. He was to have all the power that he would have had if he had never sinned.

How wonderful was the love of JESUS ! Does He not give us a good lesson as to how we ought

to forgive? We must not forgive half-way. But forgive with all your heart, and then treat the one you forgive as if he had done no wrong, treat him exactly as you did before. It is not forgiving to say, "I forgive, but I don't want to see you again. Go away from me."

Suppose a boy had cheated another at playing marbles, and then came and said he was sorry, and brought the marbles back. It would not be forgiving like our Lord to say, "I forgive you, but I will never play with you again." You must say, "Oh, I am so glad; come let us play again now."

Or if a girl had hindered another in her work, and then was sorry, it would not be forgiving like our Lord to say, "I forgive, but now go away or you may hinder me again." Would it not be better to say, "Oh, I am glad you have come back. Will you help me now?" That would be to be like JESUS CHRIST.

The keys that Peter always carries teach us the same thing. Do you know why he carries them?

Before our Lord came all God's people were taken out of the nation of the Jews, but now the Church was to be made up of Gentiles as well, that is, of all nations of the earth. This was a great message of good news for the Gentiles.

Now somebody must go and tell the Gentiles, *and our Lord chose S. Peter to be the first to do this.*

This was like opening the door of the Church

to let the Gentiles in ; and because he was to be the first to do this, JESUS said that He gave to him the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven. What great love that was !

Now let us see the end of S. Peter's life. Since our Lord forgave him we must call him *Saint Peter*.

After JESUS had told him about the keys, He told him also that some day he should be brave enough to die for his Master. And so it happened.

Many years after S. Peter was in Rome. The heathen soldiers took him and asked him to deny JESUS CHRIST. This time he was brave, and said, "No, he would not; he was a Christian." "Then we shall kill you." "You may if you please, but I love JESUS, and will not deny Him."

So they took him away and crucified him. When S. Peter saw the cross he said he was not worthy to die as JESUS did, and so he begged them to crucify him with his head downwards. And they did so. He was glad to die for JESUS, but even then he did not forget to be humble because of his sin.

S. Peter's history tells us of the great love of our Saviour JESUS in forgiving us our sins, and it tells us too how sorry and humble we should be all our life long to think that we could have sinned against so loving a Lord.



S. JAMES.

Gal. i. 9

The Third Sunday after Easter.

S. JAMES.

I COR. xv. 7.

WHEN you look at to-day's picture I think it is very likely that you will not know who it is. It is one of the apostles to whom our Lord JESUS CHRIST appeared alone after His Resurrection.

Our Lord appeared many times when the apostles were gathered together, but He only came four times to persons when they were alone, at least the Bible only tells us of four. One was S. Mary Magdalene, and another S. Peter, as you know; then there was S. Thomas, about whom we will think next Sunday, and S. James, whose picture this is.

I think you remember that there were two apostles called James. One was the brother of S. John, and the son of Zebedee the fisherman; the other was the son of Alphæus, or, as he is sometimes called, Clopas. The James we are to think about to-day is the second one, the son of Alphæus or Clopas.

His mother's name was Mary, and she was the sister of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This, as you know, would make James a relation of our Lord. The children of sisters are cousins, so James was a

cousin of JESUS CHRIST. He is sometimes called in the Bible "James, the Lord's brother."

He was not really our Lord's brother, for the Blessed Virgin Mary had only one Son, our Lord JESUS CHRIST Himself; but it is the custom in Eastern countries to call those who are nearly related brothers, sometimes even an uncle and nephew are spoken of in this way. Some people think that Alphæus died when James and his three brothers and three sisters were very young, and that his mother Mary took her children and went to live with her sister the Blessed Virgin. Of course if all the children were brought up and went to school and played together, it was very natural that JESUS CHRIST and James and all the rest should be spoken of as brothers and sisters.

James, when he grew up, believed in JESUS CHRIST, and became one of His apostles; and, as I have said, was one of the four to whom JESUS came alone after His Resurrection.

I wonder why JESUS came to him. Let us see if we can find out.

There are a great many stories told us about the apostles besides what we read in the Bible. We cannot be quite sure that these are all true, but they may be true, and very likely the most of them are true.

Now there is a story about S. James, and it is this. He knew that JESUS had said that He would rise from the dead, and he knew that JESUS spoke the truth. So he was quite certain that he

would see his Lord again. When Good Friday was over he was so sorry for his dear Lord's sufferings, and also because he had left his Master, that he made a vow that he would neither eat nor drink until his Lord came back. It was while he was fasting and praying and expecting that JESUS came to him. I like to think of him so faithful in believing the words of JESUS, and I hope the story is true.

But whether that story is true or not, there is another very good reason why he was chosen to see JESUS all alone.

Our Blessed Lord was going away from the world, and He would not be seen any more, and people would not be able to come to Him to be taught and to be baptized. But Baptism and teaching are to go on until the end of the world, when He will come again. Now it was for this that He made His Church. His Church is to go and baptize, and teach, and feed people with the Blessed Sacrament, and so get them ready for His coming again.

It was in Jerusalem that JESUS began His Church. He gathered all the apostles there and gave them the Holy Ghost, telling them that they were to go into all the world, "beginning at Jerusalem." So Jerusalem is the Mother Church of all the world. We are told by S. Paul that Jerusalem on earth is a type of Heaven, and this is the reason of it.

The Church at Jerusalem must have a head.

There must be some one who should be able to take the lead and direct what should be done when JESUS was gone ; as we speak now, we should say that there must be a *Bishop*.

And this Bishop, or Head of the Church, was S. JAMES. Our Lord pointed him out by the Holy Spirit as the one whom He thought the best to rule the Church in His Name. All the rest acknowledged his authority, and what he said was done.

At one time there was a great discussion about the Gentiles whom Peter had admitted into the Church, and Peter and the rest came to Jerusalem to consider it. When all had spoken James the Bishop decided what was to be done, saying, "My sentence is," and all agreed to it.

When Peter was set free from prison he at once sent some one to tell James the Bishop what had happened.

When Paul was converted he came up to Jerusalem to see James, that he with some others of the apostles might talk with him and tell the Christians at Jerusalem that he really was converted and knew the truth about our Lord JESUS CHRIST.

We see by all this that S. James had a great work to do, and was in what we should call a very responsible position.

This, I think, is why JESUS came to him alone. He came to him to give him special direction and a special blessing, that he might be able to do all things well, and make a good Bishop for the Mother Church of the world.

How happy this must have made him ! How

often when he was tired, and perhaps worried, he must have looked back and remembered the blessing of JESUS CHRIST.

S. James, then, was Bishop of Jerusalem, and he lived there and ruled the Church so well, and did so much good, that all who knew him, both Jews and Christians, called him "The Just." That was a nice name to have.

What made him so good? Our Lord's blessing. Yes, and something more than that.

Did you ever see a camel, and if so, did you ever notice its knees? If not, the next time you see a menagerie or circus be sure to look at the camel's knees. You will see that they are not like horses' knees at all, but are flat and hard. GOD made them so because the camel kneels down to be loaded and unloaded.

Now we are told that S. James's knees were just like that. They were not made so, but they became so because he spent so much time in kneeling down to pray. Don't you think it must have hurt him? I do, but still he went on kneeling.

This was why he could rule well and do so much good.

And the people in Jerusalem knew it, and they used to come to him to pray for them and heal them when they were sick. Once in his life there was a great drought in the whole country; there had been no rain for a very, very long time, and the animals were dying for want of water. The

people all came and begged him to pray, and as soon as he prayed God heard and sent the rain.

You would think that all the people must have loved very much one who was so good and could do such great things for them. And so they did for a time.

But when he had been Bishop nearly thirty years some of the wicked Jews, especially those who did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, began to hate him because he was so just and good. They came to him and tried to persuade him to give up being a Christian. They said they wondered how one so wise and learned as he was could be so foolish; he might have great honours if he would give this up. It was not likely that one who prayed as he did would give way. Besides, S. James knew the truth of the Resurrection, for JESUS had come to him after He was risen from the dead. So he went on teaching about JESUS CHRIST. At last one day they took him up and put him on a pinnacle of the Temple—perhaps it was the same on which Satan put our Lord to tempt Him—and they told him to deny JESUS CHRIST before all the people who were gathered together below. You do not think he would obey, do you? Of course not. And so they were very angry, and pushed him off the Temple, and he fell right down on the ground in the middle of the people. That was terrible, was it not? It was like being thrown down from a church tower.

 S. James was not killed at first, though dread-

fully hurt. I think we can all guess what would be the first thing he would do. He would pray. Yes, all bruised and bleeding, he got upon his knees in the crowd and prayed, as his dear Lord did, "I beseech Thee, Lord GOD, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." Some when they saw this would have spared him, but the rest threw stones upon him, and at last one cruel man in the crowd took a great club and struck him on the head and killed him. And so he died for the sake of his dear Lord, and chiefly because he believed in His Resurrection.

He is a good saint to think of at Easter-time. We may not all have to die, like him, for JESUS; but we can all ask that our Lord will bless us, that we may be able to do our work well and be "just" before GOD; and we can pray that whatever happens we may not be afraid to say we love our Lord and to be true to Him.



S. THOMAS.

S. John xx. 28.

The Fourth Sunday after Easter.

S. THOMAS.

S. JOHN xx. 28.

It is still Easter-tide, and I must take you back again to Easter Day, that we may think of another of the saints to whom our Lord JESUS CHRIST appeared after His Resurrection.

Late in the evening of Easter Day the apostles of our Lord, and others with them, were all gathered secretly together. There were only ten apostles there. There should have been twelve; but one, Judas, had betrayed his Master, and then had died a terrible death; he was gone. Another one, Thomas, was not there. We are not told where he was. Perhaps he was sorrowing all alone; perhaps he was still searching to see if he could find out what had become of the Body of JESUS. I think he ought to have been with the others.

They were all gathered together in an upper chamber in Jerusalem. It was the same place where their Lord had had supper with them on the last night of His life. Do you not think that that must have made it very dear to them? It was the only place they had to meet in. There were

no churches built yet, so they met there to pray, and made it their church.

While they were gathered together they talked of all the things that had happened, and of all that the Holy Women had told them. S. Mary Magdalene and S. Peter also told them how that very morning they had seen JESUS alive. Two other disciples were there who had met JESUS as they walked on the road. These ten talked quietly together; for though they were full of wonder and joy at what they heard, they dared not praise GOD aloud lest the Jews should hear them and come in and kill them, as they had got JESUS killed. And they locked the doors.

While they were talking and praying together JESUS came. He did not open the doors; but just as when He rose He passed through the stone that covered the mouth of the tomb, so He passed in through the doors. At first they were frightened, and could hardly believe that it really was JESUS. Would not you be frightened too if you were to see Him suddenly standing here in front of you? But when they saw that it was really their Lord they were very glad, and fell down and worshipped Him.

This sight of JESUS and this joy S. Thomas lost because he was not there. How sorry he must have been!

Don't you think he was a little like people who stayed away from their Easter communion? Just *fancy* if any of you had overslept yourselves, or had *been* persuaded to go somewhere else, and had *missed* your communion, how sad it would have

been ! Oh, there would have been no happiness on Easter Day if we had not come to meet our Lord here ! Never let anything keep you from your Church or your communion ; you do not know what you may lose.

Of course these apostles who saw and worshipped their Lord could not keep their joy to themselves ; they must tell the good news of the Resurrection to others. So they told Thomas.

When Thomas heard that they had seen JESUS, he said something we must try to understand rightly. He said that unless he saw JESUS for himself he would not believe. His words were, "Except I shall see in His Hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His Side, I will not believe."

What could he mean ? He could not think that the apostles and others were saying what was not true. He must have thought that in some way or another they had made a mistake. How could it be ?

If we want to know what he meant, I think we must go back a little way and think of some things Thomas had said before this time.

Some time before JESUS told His apostles that He was going to Bethany, near Jerusalem. He was going to raise a dead man. The apostles did not wish Him to go, because the Jews had tried *once to kill Him*, and they thought they would try *again*. But JESUS said He must go. Then

Thomas spoke out, "Let us also go, that we *may die with Him.*"

What a grand thing that was to say! How he must have loved his Lord! He loved Him so much that he could not bear to be separated from Him; he would rather run the risk of being killed with Him than stay behind without Him. He did not die then, but he was ready to do so. Remember his great love.

At another time, on the night before He suffered, JESUS was speaking to His apostles of the place He would prepare for them in His Father's House. S. Thomas longed to be there with JESUS, but he did not know how they were to get there. So he said to JESUS, "Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way?"

And JESUS answered him, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life: no man cometh unto the Father but by Me." He told Thomas that He Himself was the Way.

Now Thomas did not know what this meant. *You* know what it means when we say that JESUS is our Way to Heaven. It means that we must become His members, that is, that we must be baptized into Him. When we are baptized into Him He gives us life, and by that life we can enter Heaven. As JESUS said at another time, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God."

Thomas did not yet know this, but he knew *that the dear Lord Whom he so loved had said*

that He was the Way to Life. When he knew that JESUS was dead and buried, how he must have wondered! How would his Lord's words come true? If He was dead, how could He be the Way to the Father in Heaven?

But now he heard that JESUS was alive again. That was indeed good news, for now the promise would be fulfilled. He was very glad. But it was not enough to hear of this. He must see Him for himself. Yes, and more than that, he must touch Him. If JESUS was to be the Way for him to go to Heaven, JESUS must come to him and receive him to Himself; there must be some way in which he could be made a "member of Christ, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." He knew that his Lord had spoken the truth when He said, "I am the Way," so now he wanted to see JESUS and know that He was indeed the Way for him. And so he doubted, and said he would not believe in the Resurrection of JESUS CHRIST until he saw Him and knew how He would be for him the Way to Life.

And JESUS heard his words, and read the deep love and longing in his heart, and came to him. On the following Sunday night, when they were all met again, and Thomas with them, JESUS came and showed His Hands and Side to Thomas, and let him touch them; and Thomas worshipped Him with great joy, saying, "My Lord and my GOD!"

Children, I think we all need to be like S.

Thomas. We must not be content with believing just because others say so ; we must come and touch JESUS for ourselves ; and we must not keep away from Him because others say there is no need to come.

People have said, "You need not be baptized ; if you believe, it is enough." Others have said, "There is no use in Confirmation ; you can be good without it." But you must say, "No, that is not true ; I must come and touch JESUS. He must take me up in His arms and bless me, and He by His Bishop must lay His Hands on my head and give me His Spirit ; then I can be good."

Or if they were to tell you that you can be sorry for your sins without receiving Absolution, or that you need not go to Holy Communion, learn from S. Thomas to say to them all, "No, it is not enough for me ; you can do as you please, but I will come and touch my Lord, and my Lord shall touch me in the Sacraments of His Church." Never be satisfied without coming to touch and receive your dear Lord JESUS through those Sacraments in which He is Who is not only the Truth and the Life, but the Way to your Father in Heaven.

Thomas never doubted or hesitated any more. He knew now the "Way," and all through his life he went on looking up to his Lord and GOD in Heaven. He seems in our picture to be looking up and longing for the time when he would see his Lord again.

He went preaching the Gospel in many countries. After many years he went to India. At first the people listened to him, but soon they took him and bound him, and told him they were going to kill him. Now he was to have his wish and die for JESUS. He must have been glad.

Do you see what he has in his hand? It is a long spear. S. Thomas always has a spear in his hand in pictures; you can know him by this. And when he comes again with JESUS CHRIST in His glory you will be able to look up and know him by the spear-wound. Think what a beautiful death he died. They thrust him through with a spear. Can you not fancy his joy when he saw how they were going to kill him? How he might say, "My Lord and my GOD was pierced with a spear for me, and I saw the spear-wound in His Side, and knew Him as my own. By the Blood from that wound I have been washed from my sins. Now I too am to be pierced, and my wound shall show my Saviour my love for Him. Oh, what a joy to be a sharer in the very wounds of JESUS CHRIST!" S. Thomas's faith and love had a great reward.



S. JOHN.

S. John xiii. 23.

The Fifth Sunday after Easter.

(ROGATION SUNDAY.)

S. JOHN THE EVANGELIST.

S. JOHN xxi. 21, 22.

TO-DAY is the last Sunday in Easter-tide, and we have to think of the last saint who is especially spoken of in connection with our Lord's Resurrection. He is the last, but not the least. Indeed, he is the greatest of all. He is called the "disciple whom JESUS loved."

You will all know his picture as soon as you see it. You know S. Peter by the keys, S. Thomas by the spear, S. James by the club, and S. John by the eagle, and you know them all to be saints by the glory round their heads.

The eagle is the bird that flies up nearest to Heaven. It loves to build its nest on the tops of very, very high mountains, and there it sits looking upwards towards GOD. People say that the eagle can look at the sun without hurting or shutting its eyes. In all this the eagle is like S. John, and so we always put an eagle in his pictures. S. John was never so happy as when he was sitting near to JESUS and gazing upon His Face. S. John knew better than all the rest what JESUS meant when

He said He was the Son of God ; and S. John is the saint who tells us most about Heaven, for He saw Heaven open, and all the glory shone out upon him from it. As the eagle gazes on the sun, so S. John gazes upon the glory of God. That is beautiful to think of.

You will remember who S. John was. He was not John the Baptist, the son of Zacharias and Elisabeth. He was the son of Zebedee the fisherman. His father was not very poor, for he owned a ship and had hired servants. S. John used to go with his father fishing, and I have no doubt he was very useful to him. I don't suppose he went fishing when he ought not. Did you ever know any boys or young men who went fishing with father when they ought to have been somewhere else, perhaps in Church on Sunday morning? Well, we may be quite sure that S. John was not one of that kind.

One day when they had come back from fishing JESUS CHRIST passed by and called S. John to come with Him. JESUS wanted him to give up catching fish and go with Him to catch men. CHRIST's Church is like a net, and those who bring men into it are like fishermen. JESUS wanted John to be one of these. And John was very glad to be called to this. He left his ship and his father, and all that he had, and went with JESUS CHRIST. You do not forget, I am sure, what the cord three times round his waist means. He gave up all for
 his Lord.

S. John stayed with his Lord all the time He was on earth before He died on the Cross. He was the only one of the apostles who went with JESUS when He was taken to the high priest and to Pilate, and he was the only one who stood by the Cross to see Him die.

You do not forget how JESUS gave him His own Blessed Mother to take care of. How S. John must have watched over her and cared for her as long as she lived !

Now let us see what happened after our Lord's Resurrection. I think you remember the day that JESUS came when they were fishing and told Peter to feed His sheep and lambs. S. John was there at the time, and was the first to know JESUS.

After JESUS had spoken to Peter and told him what would happen to him, Peter wanted to know what would happen to S. John, and so he asked JESUS. But JESUS would not tell him. He said, "What is that to thee? follow thou Me." It did not matter to Peter what became of John; he was to be good himself and follow JESUS CHRIST.

Peter was what we call now "curious," or "inquisitive." There are people like this now, people who want to know all about everybody else. They are not nice people to be with. Don't you be like this, children. Obey your own mother, do your own work, pray for others, but don't be always asking questions about them.

S. John asked no questions. He knew that he loved JESUS, and that his Lord loved him, and

would do what was best for him, and he was content with that. He knew that JESUS had risen and was going to Heaven, and that he would rise some day and go there too. What more could he want to know? Only love the Lord with all your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength.

S. John lived to be a hundred years old, and then God took him away. His enemies could not kill him as they killed the other apostles. They did try; they even dipped him alive into a large vessel of boiling oil. But God took care of him, and he was not hurt.

When they found they could not kill him, they took him away all alone and put him on a little island, where there was no Church and no Sacraments, where he had no Church people to come to him. He was all alone.

We call this going into exile, and S. John found it very lonely. Some people have to go into exile now. Sometimes in the summer-time children are taken away from Church and Communion and Sunday school, and carried off perhaps for two or three months into some country place, or to some rocky place by the sea, where there are none of these things. This is like S. John banished to his island, and it is very sad. Of course the children can't help it, but it is really wrong for people who can help it to go to such places; it is like giving up God for mere pleasure.

But S. John could not help it, and so God was *with him* there.

It was while he was there, on one Sunday, when I suppose he was thinking about the Church and wishing he could be with other Christians then, that GOD spoke to him and opened Heaven for him and showed him all its glory.

He did not mind his exile then. It was worth while being driven away from home to see such things as these. He wrote them down for us in the last book of the Bible, which we call the "Revelation of S. John the Divine." I suppose the scroll in his hand in the picture is this book. I am sure when we read them we think we would be ready to go into exile too if we were sure to see such things as those, to see Heaven open and hear the songs of saints and angels round about the throne.

Well, remember, children, that if we are like S. John we shall not only see these things, but we shall go to Heaven and have them all for our very own. This will indeed be to be like eagles, to fly right up into Heaven itself—

" Oh that I had wings of angels,
Up to soar and heavenward fly !
I would seek the gates of Zion,
Far above the starry sky."

We have come now almost to the end of Easter tide. Next Thursday is Ascension Day. It is forty days from Easter, and is the day on which JESUS CHRIST went up into Heaven. Where He is gone we hope to go. Won't you try and keep Ascension Day, and look forward to the day when you will rise and go with Him into His glory?

The three days that come before Ascension Day are to help us to do this. They are called "Rogation," or "Asking" days. How many things the apostles must have wanted to ask their Master as the time came near for Him to go away! How many things we need to ask if we are to be ready to ascend with Him! These days are to help us to pray. And they are days on which the Church tells us to fast as well as pray. If you will try and deny yourselves something, and pray well, I am sure you will be happier on Ascension Day. Suppose we all try to remember our Lent resolution and keep it carefully for these three days. I know some children who have done this, and I know it helped them to keep Ascension Day well, for they told me so. Think of some one thing that you most want to make you good, and ask for that, and JESUS will be sure to come and bless you.



JESUS CHRIST ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN.

S. Luke xxiv. 51.

Ascension Day.

JESUS CHRIST ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN.

ACTS i. 9.

ASCENSION DAY ought to be a day of great joy. We ought to think more of it than we do of any Sunday, and as much as we do of Christmas Day and Easter Day. To-day our joy goes up much higher than the earth, it goes right up into Heaven, and it makes all the angels rejoice with us.

Think of JESUS CHRIST once more, and for the last time, amongst the apostles. You can think of Him sitting with them in the upper chamber, where they have spent so much of their time since Good Friday night. What a wonderful conversation that must have been, and how they must have looked back to it afterwards !

Then think of them as the evening is coming on, going out with JESUS CHRIST just as they did on the evening of the day before Good Friday. They went with Him down the path they knew so well, past the garden of Gethsemane, and close by the village of Bethany, where they had often been with Him, and so on by the familiar road to the *top of the Mount of Olives.*

I wonder if they felt as if something was going

to happen ; don't you think they must have ? They did not know what it was, but this feeling made them look at their Lord more earnestly and lovingly. They must have seen something different in Him, something that made Him look more like a king. It made them ask Him if He was now going to drive away the Romans and take the power Himself, and reign over His people. They did not understand that the Kingdom of JESUS CHRIST is a *heavenly* not an *earthly* kingdom. But they were to have patience and wait, and see what GOD would do.

Talking in this way they came to the top of the mount. Now He stood still, and they gathered all round Him. As they stood looking upon Him, and wondering at the strange glory that shone out in His face, He lifted up His hands and blessed them. We can think how they all fell on their knees to receive the blessing. While the words of blessing were still on His lips, the power of the Holy Spirit lifted Him up from the earth and carried Him away from them toward Heaven. And then a bright cloud came all round Him and hid Him from their sight, and they saw Him no more.

That cloud was not like a common cloud such as we see every day, it was a cloud of angels. JESUS CHRIST was not taken away from the apostles to some other place in the world. He was taken away to Heaven, and the blessed angels came around Him to go with Him there. The angels are His soldiers and servants, and so He was like

a great King going home with all His soldiers and servants rejoicing around Him.

And the angels were unselfish in their joy. We call a person unselfish when he does not think about himself, but is glad that others are happy. An unselfish child will be glad when he sees others get something good, even though he does not get it himself. And the angels were like this. You know that JESUS did not come into the world to save the blessed angels, for they had never sinned. He came to save men. The angels knew this, and watched and rejoiced for man's sake, for in JESUS CHRIST they saw man's nature saved from sin and lifted up to the glory of Heaven.

They rejoiced, too, for the sake of JESUS Himself. He is the angels' King. They sang His praise when He came into the world as a little Child at Bethlehem ; they watched over Him during all His life on earth ; and now that He was going as GOD and Man to take the full glory of His Heavenly Kingdom, they waited on Him, that they might sing a new song to the glory of GOD.

“ See, the Conqueror mounts in triumph,
See the King in royal state,
Riding on the clouds His chariot
To His heavenly palace gate.
Hark ! the choirs of angel voices
Joyful alleluias sing,
And the portals high are lifted
To receive their Heavenly King.”

But this was not all they did. Do you remem-

ber that when JESUS was born at Bethlehem the angels could not keep the good news to themselves? they went and told the shepherds. It was just the same on Ascension Day.

The apostles stood watching JESUS as He went up, and when He was gone they still watched the sky, almost as if they could not really believe that He was gone, or as if they expected to see Him coming down again. The angels saw this, and two of them, being allowed by God, came out of the bright cloud to the apostles. They came and told them that JESUS was really gone into Heaven, and that He would come back again in the same way that He went.

When the apostles heard this they were very glad, they were full of joy.

Do you think it strange that they should be glad when they had just seen their dear Lord taken from them? It was not really strange.

Indeed, they might well be glad. If you had a very dear friend who had suffered very much in body and soul, and had been very poor, and had many bad people around; and if you were told that this dear friend had gone to a beautiful place where none of these things would trouble him any more, would not you be glad, even if you knew you would never see him again? I am sure you would. And so the apostles were glad to think that all the pains and sufferings of JESUS were over, and He was in the glory of Heaven.

And then if you knew that your friend who was *gone* to that beautiful land was getting a place

ready for you, and would come and fetch you, would not you be still more glad? And JESUS had told the apostles that He was going to prepare a place for them, and would come again and take them there, and that then they should be always with Him. No wonder they were glad.

Besides these things there was something else that made them glad. All the time that JESUS was on earth He had looked like any other man, poor, and working hard for His living, and yet He was the Son of GOD. It had been hard for the apostles always to believe this. When they saw Him going about quietly, still more when they knew He had suffered and died, it was very hard to believe that He was GOD. But now it was quite clear to them. They had seen Him go up to His heavenly throne, and they never would doubt again. JESUS is GOD. That is enough to make every heart full of joy.

So, children, on this Ascension Day let us be glad. Be glad to think that JESUS as Man will suffer no more; He is at rest in Heaven.

Be glad to think that JESUS in Heaven is your GOD, and worship Him with all your heart and soul.

And be glad to think that He is coming again to take you to the beautiful place where He is gone.

Oh, how the apostles must have watched for Him all through their lives! When they looked up to the sky and saw a bright cloud lit up with

the sunshine they must have been reminded of the cloud that hid Jesus. Perhaps they thought, "Is that the cloud in which He is coming again?" We may think of this too. When we go out and see all bright and beautiful around, it ought to make us think of Heaven and wish to be there. Every bright cloud may make us look for Him, for He may come again at any moment.

Perhaps you never thought that looking at clouds could make you happy. But indeed it can, if you remember what the clouds remind you of.

There was once a poor old woman who had many sorrows and troubles. Whenever any of these came on her she would go out and look for a cloud, and then she would say to herself, "My Lord is coming again to set me free from all these things; perhaps that is the very cloud that hides Him from my sight. He will not be long." And so, as she said, "she always got comfort from a cloud."

Let Ascension Day, then, make us very happy.

"Hail the day that sees Him rise
To His throne above the skies;
CHRIST, the Lamb for sinners given,
Enters now the highest heaven.
Alleluia !

Lord, though parted from our sight
Far above the starry height,
Grant our hearts may thither rise,
Seeking Thee above the skies.
Alleluia !"



JESUS CHRIST ON HIS THRONE.

S. Mark xvi. 19.

The Sunday after the Ascension.

(EXPECTATION SUNDAY.)

OUR LORD IN GLORY.

S. MARK xvi. 19.

THIS Sunday, like so many others, has two names. It is called the Sunday after the Ascension, or the Sunday within the Octave of the Ascension, and it is also called "Expectation Sunday." We shall see presently why it has this second name.

On Thursday last we kept Ascension Day, the day on which our Lord JESUS CHRIST went up into Heaven.

When we say that JESUS ascended into Heaven we must not forget that He was there before. As GOD JESUS was in Heaven with His Father from all eternity, and indeed He was with His Father in Heaven even while He was here on earth. JESUS CHRIST had two natures united in one Person—the nature of GOD and the nature of MAN. He did not ascend into Heaven as GOD, for He was always there, but He took up His human nature into the glory. Man was never in Heaven before, but now JESUS CHRIST is there both GOD and MAN.

"HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, AND SITTETH ON
THE RIGHT HAND OF GOD."

This is what our picture is meant to make us think of. It does not really represent Him. When JESUS was on earth He looked very much like other boys and men, and so we can make a picture that will be like Him. But no one can picture the glory of Heaven. We can make Him look great and grand, but cannot really show His glory. But still you can look at your picture and think of Him.

What is He doing in Heaven?

First of all, He is *reigning*. JESUS CHRIST is a King. He was King while He was on earth, but very few would own Him. Now He is King in Heaven. He rules over all the world; He rules over men and angels. He sits upon a glorious white throne, and is a King for ever.

" 'Tis meet that children's voices
Should praise the children's King "

And if we praise Him, we must try and please Him; we must obey Him. I know a very little girl who is living in a strange country away from her own land and away from her Queen. But this little girl is always thinking about her Queen, and always longing to see her. She keeps the flag of her own country in her sight, and whenever her Queen's birthday comes round, and on many, many other days, she prays, and says, "God save the

Queen." When any one goes from where she lives now to her own country, she says, "Will you see the Queen, and if so, will you give my love to her?" and when they come back she says, "Did you see the Queen, and were you glad?"

She loves and honours her Queen. So must we love and honour our Heavenly King.

When He was in the world they put on Him a crown of thorns, and all His life was woe. Now His crown is glorious, and no one can disturb the peace of His Heavenly Kingdom. Would not you like to be there with Him?

"In the midst of that dear city
Christ is reigning on His seat,
And the angels swing their censers
In a ring about His feet.

Oh that I had wings of angels
Here to spread and heavenward fly,
I would seek the gates of Zion
Far above the starry sky."

Now look again at the picture and see what He is doing. He sits upon His throne, and He spreads out His hands toward us.

When father and mother stretch out their hands like that we know that they want their little child to come to them. And so JESUS by stretching out His hands is calling us all to Him. He is saying to us, as He said when He was on earth, "Suffer little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven."

And if you look at His hands, you will see them the marks that the cruel nails made when they crucified Him. When we see those marks we are sure that He means what He says. It is as if He said, "See, I suffered and died for you to make a way for you to Heaven; will you not come to Me now?"

If you would only think of this, you would keep from so many things that are wrong. Children could not do wrong if they remembered that Jesus in Heaven is stretching out His hands and calling them to come to Him.

And if you thought of this more it would make you care less about the things of this world, and so much more content to be without them.

A little girl was once going along a road all alone and as she went she kept picking up pretty stones and filling her pinafore with them, and gathering the wildflowers from the banks. Suddenly she heard a voice call her name. She looked up, and found she had come to the gate of a beautiful garden, and there in the garden was her own mother, with beautiful flowers all round her, and holding out a lovely bunch to her little one. Oh, how quickly she threw down all the stones and the wildflowers which looked so poor and withered by the side of the beauties in her mother's hand!

If we would think of JESUS in Heaven we should not be discontented and fretful if we could not get what we want now. It is better to have little now than to have much when we come to be with Him. So JESUS in Heaven is calling us to Himself.

Now when we hear of these things it is very likely that we think that we are not fit to go to Heaven. How can those who do so many wrong things get there? Will JESUS take them?

No! He will not take you if you are going on doing wrong and not trying to be any better. But if you are sorry for your sins and trying to be good He will. Let us think of something else that He is doing in Heaven that helps us now.

He stretches out His hands, and those hands have the marks of the wounds in them. What is He doing this for? To call us. Yes, and more than that. In Heaven JESUS CHRIST is *pleading* for us. He is showing the wounds in His sacred Body to His Father. He bore those wounds for our sins, and now He is pleading them in Heaven for us that we may be forgiven. We call Him our "Intercessor," because by that Body which He has taken for us, and in which He suffered so much, He intercedes, or goes between man and God, that man may be forgiven and taken into the glory of Heaven.

If, then, you wish to go there and know that you are not fit, you must think of JESUS spreading out His wounded hands, and ask Him to plead for you.

There is yet one thing more we can think of that our dear Lord is doing in Heaven.

Do you notice that the throne on which He sits seems to have wheels? What can that mean?

Before He left the earth our Lord told His disciples that He would not leave them as orphans, but would come to them. He told them, too, that

He would send them His Holy Spirit. If we put these two things together we shall know that He meant to teach them that He would come to them by His Spirit. You know that when we are baptized with water and the Holy Spirit, we are made members of CHRIST, CHRIST our Lord comes to dwell in us.

This is why, when one of God's prophets saw the throne of JESUS, it seemed to be on wheels, and to be going forth through all the world. Our Blessed Lord has indeed entered Heaven and sat down upon His throne, but He is still going forth by His Spirit filling all the world, dwelling in the hearts of Christians. He has come to each one of you to make you His own, and He will stay with you always.

The first day on which He came in this way was Whitsunday, that is, next Sunday. To-day the apostles were all gathered together waiting for and expecting His coming, and so it is Expectation Sunday.

CHRIST has come to us, and so we are not expecting Him in the same way that the apostles were. But still we are always looking for Him to bless us more and more.

Try this week and ask GOD the Holy Ghost to help you to know better what it is to have JESUS CHRIST dwelling in you.

"Thou Whose grace the Church doth fill,
Showing her God's perfect will,
Making JESUS present still,
Hear us, Holy Spirit."



CHILDREN OF GOD.

Eph. v. 1.

Whitsunday.

THE GIFT OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

ACTS ii. 3.

WE must think to-day of the great Gift that our Lord JESUS CHRIST gives to His children, the Gift He gives them from Heaven.

If I have something to give you, and instead of giving it to you myself, out of my hand into yours, I send it to you by the hand of some one else, it is still my gift to you, is it not? Yes, it is still mine, not the gift of the one who brings it to you.

And supposing that the person I gave it to were to give it to some one else, and he gave it to another, and that person again gave it to another, and so it was handed from one to another through a great many hands, perhaps as many as one hundred and twenty-five, until at last it was given to you, would that make any difference as to whose gift it was? No! it would be still my gift, though it reached you through so many persons, and you would thank me for it, though you might thank them for bringing it to you.

Think, too, of this. If it was a good gift at first, and if it was something that would not spoil by being handled, it would still be as good a gift when

it reached you as when I gave it to the first one, it would be the very same.

So it would still be a good gift, and it would still be mine.

Now our Lord JESUS CHRIST, when He was on earth as Man, set us an example of how we should live if we wish to be good and follow Him to Heaven.

He taught this lesson to the apostles first, for they were with Him, and walked and talked with Him then, and He told them that He had set them the example that they should walk in His steps. They were to teach the lesson to others after them, and to write it down in the Gospels that we might know as well as they.

This is why ever since Advent Sunday we have been learning together about JESUS CHRIST. We saw how He was born into the world, and how He lived at Nazareth as a little Child. We have learned from Him to be truthful, and pure, and honest, and obedient, and full of love for every one; and we have learned to pray, and to try to please our Heavenly Father in everything. We have learned all this and much more, and now I hope you are all going really to try to do these things, and to follow His example, and be like Him. You will try, will you not?

The apostles, who were the first to follow JESUS, *found it hard*. Satan tempted them very often. *JESUS knew* that it would be hard, and so He pro-

mised to send them a great Gift which should help them. This Gift was the Holy Ghost, and He was given to them to-day.

To-day we call Whitsunday, but among the Jews it was called Pentecost, which means fifty, because it comes fifty days after Easter. Ten days after JESUS ascended into Heaven the apostles were all gathered in the upper chamber, where He had so often been with them. While they were praying they heard a sound like a rushing mighty wind filling the whole house. While they listened, wondering what it could mean, they saw a bright Light in the room dividing into separate tongues or rays, and resting on each of their heads. How wonderful this was! When they saw it they knew their Lord had kept His promise and sent them the Gift of the Holy Ghost. They knew that now they would be able to obey their Lord, and do His works and follow Him all the days of their life. So they were full of joy, and went to the Temple, that there in God's House they might praise Him for His goodness.

But this Gift of the Holy Ghost was not for them alone, others wanted it too; you and I need it just as much as they, if we are to follow JESUS and be good. JESUS CHRIST knows this, and so He taught the apostles how to give the Gift to others, and they to others after them, that so it might be handed on from one to another until it is given to the youngest child amongst you. Now remember what I said at first about my gift to you, and see how this Gift of the Holy Ghost has been handed

on to you. I think you know how this has been done. It is by the laying on of hands. The apostles laid their hands on the heads of chosen men and gave them this Gift and made them bishops. Those bishops laid their hands on others and gave them the Gift also. So it has come down from the first; until, after passing through about one hundred and twenty-five generations of bishops, the Gift is in the hands of the Bishops of the Church who are alive now, that they may give it to us.

You know how they do this, do you not? They choose out men and make them priests and deacons, and send them out to baptize with water and the Holy Ghost, that so by being baptized children may receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. And after that, when children have been taught about Baptism and the Christian faith, a bishop himself comes and lays his hands on the head of every baptized child, that he or she may receive and be confirmed and strengthened by the sevenfold gifts of the Holy Ghost.

So it is that all of you who have been baptized have received this great Gift. You can look back to the first Whitsunday and praise God for the Gift He gave His Church, and you can know that you have it. You have the very same Gift. It has not been changed, it has not been spoiled by passing through so many hands before it came to you; you have the same Gift that JESUS gave to His *apostles*.

 On Whitsunday, then, you must thank God for

the Gift, and you must thank GOD for your Baptism, in which the Gift has been given to you.

Those of you who have been confirmed must thank GOD for that as well. In the first prayer in the Confirmation Service in your Prayer Book you will find what the Bishop prayed for you. He said :—

“ Almighty and everliving GOD, Who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these Thy servants by Water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins ; Strengthen them, we beseech thee, O Lord, with the Holy Ghost the Comforter, and daily increase in them Thy manifold gifts of grace ; the spirit of wisdom and understanding, the spirit of counsel and ghostly strength, the spirit of knowledge and true godliness ; and fill them, O Lord, with the spirit of Thy holy fear, now and for ever. Amen.”

Then he laid his hands upon your head, and these gifts were given to you.

We do not now see the light and fiery tongues, nor hear the rushing mighty sound, but we know that GOD’S Word is true, and that first in Baptism and then in Confirmation we receive the Holy Ghost.

“ Our blest Redeemer, ere He breathed
His tender last farewell,
A Guide, a Comforter, bequeathed
With us to dwell.”

Yon picture is intended to help you to remember this. We see a Dove, and this is meant to teach us of the Holy Ghost. We cannot really see a

Spirit, but when GOD the Holy Ghost was seen at our Lord's Baptism, He was seen in the form of a Dove, and so we may picture Him thus for ourselves. He hovers over us as a Dove.

Then there is the Light that comes from the wings of the Dove and rests upon the boy and girl beneath. The Blessed Spirit does not merely hover over us, but He comes to us as a Ray of Heavenly Light, to fill our hearts that we may know JESUS CHRIST and be able to follow Him.

And the Ray of Light is divided into SEVEN, that you may remember the sevenfold Gift you have received.

The two children are praying. They have heard of JESUS, and they wish to follow Him; they want to love Him now, and they want to be like Him, that when He comes again He may know them as His own, and take them to be with Him in Heaven. As they pray the Holy Ghost fills their hearts to tell them what they ought to do, and give them strength to do it.

“ Holy Spirit, wondrous Dove,
Dew descending from above,
Breath of Life and God of Love,
Hear us, Holy Spirit ! ”

Now, you have learned our Whitsunday lesson. It is very easy, and it is this. JESUS CHRIST has come into the world and lived and died for you. He has made you His children. He wants you to live as His children, that is, to live like Him.  And you need not say that you cannot. You must

not think that JESUS is so good that you never can be like Him. He has given you the Holy Ghost that you may be able to do all these things, that you may be really good. And the Holy Ghost never leaves you.

Remember, then, wherever you are, in Church or at home, in school or at play, GOD the Holy Ghost is with you. In winter and summer, in sickness and when quite well, He is always with you. If you wish to do right, ask Him to help you and He certainly will. When you are tempted to some sin, or laughed at for doing right, say some little prayer, if only, "Come, Holy Ghost," or, "Come, Holy Ghost, make me truthful," or obedient, or loving and gentle, or pure, or whatever you need to make you like JESUS CHRIST.

Think of all the children who have lived before you and are now in the Paradise of GOD. How hard they tried to be good! How they loved to hear and think of JESUS CHRIST! How earnestly they prayed! It was GOD the Holy Ghost Who helped them all. Without Him they could have done nothing, with Him they were good and brave, and persevered. And as He helped them so He is sure to help you, and all who read this book, and pray that it may really lead them to be more like their dear Lord JESUS.

Never be afraid. Never give up trying to be good. Never think that you are all alone. Never think that no child ever had so hard a life as you. If you ever feel like this, it is the more reason why God should help you.

No one ever failed and was lost who really remembered their Baptism and Confirmation, and prayed with all their hearts. I knew a boy who had a great temptation which very often led him into sin. He often tried to overcome it but could not. At last some one told him about the Holy Ghost, and he learned to say, "I have been confirmed, I must not do this. Holy Spirit, help me." By this help he overcame his sin.

And he is not the only one I know. Many, many children have been quite different since their Baptism or Confirmation. God the Holy Ghost has made them good.

Let me tell you of another child whom God helped to be good.

About three years ago a clergyman in a large city in America was sitting in the Sunday-school room as the children were all going out to go home, when one of the girls came to him leading another girl, whom she asked him to receive into the school. The girl was a tall, dark Indian child, about thirteen years of age.

The clergyman asked her why she wished to come to Sunday school, and she said, "Because I want to be good." She spoke English well, and could read and write, but had not been to Sunday school before; she had not been baptized, and had never learned anything about God or His Church.

So her name was put down, and the next Sunday she came, and was put in a class. The  that she came she said when she was again

asked if she had been baptized, "No, but I would like to be if it will help me to be good."

Soon after the clergyman went to see her home. I wish I could make you really understand what it was like. In a court off a back street he found a wooden house. Going in he went up three pair of rickety stairs—oh, so dirty! and such dreadful language to be heard in the rooms he passed by. At the top of the house he found the room he wanted. A large room with one low window, just such a room as you might expect to find at the top of such stairs. In one corner was a low bed, in another a mattress on the floor, a table, two chairs, one of which had no back, a stove, and a few bits of crockery, and that was all the furniture. Oh, it was a miserable place to see! The whole house has since been pulled down as not fit for people to live in.

In this poor room the clergyman found the Indian child and two little brothers. "Father was out, and mother was away in the country," she said, "and she was taking care of her brothers." The clergyman talked to them a little about being good at home as well as at Sunday school and trying to say some prayers he gave them. Then, blessing them all, he came away, promising to see their parents some other time.

So Annie, as we will call her, came to school, and came at other times too, to say her Catechism and learn about God and Baptism.

After a little while she told the clergyman her mother was come home, and would like to see him.

I must not tell you all he heard and saw when he went to the house, for the people are still living, and may perhaps see this book. It made him very, very sad. But the saddest thing he heard was this—Annie's mother had not been staying with friends in the country, as Annie had said, but had been in prison for three months, sent there as punishment for sin.

I say that this was the saddest thing, because he found that Annie had told him a lie. How dreadful this was when she said she was trying to be good! And even after he told her that he knew all about the prison she repeated the lie, declaring that her mother had never been there, that she was too much of a lady to go to any such place; or if she had, that she herself did not know of it.

It was a long time before she would own that she had lied, but at last she did, and now will you notice what she said? When asked why she had done this, she answered, "Because I wanted to be baptized and to be good, and I thought that if you knew mother was so bad you would send me away from school and not let me be good either."

Poor child! you see how little she knew of right and wrong. When she understood how wrong it is to lie even for a good purpose, she promised, with tears in her eyes, that she would never lie again, no never!

It was right that she should be punished for her lie, so she was not allowed to come to the Christmas tree, and of course her baptism had to be put off.

Perhaps there are some children who would not

have come to Sunday school any more since they had not been allowed to come to the Christmas tree, but Annie was not one of these. Next Sunday, and for many Sundays more, she was in her place, and always good.

The clergyman watched her carefully, and inquired about her life at home, and now he found she was really becoming changed. She was obedient both in school and at home. She tried to keep the room and things at home clean and tidy, though they were so poor. But more than all, she said her prayers every night and morning, and tried to help her little brothers to say prayers too. They, poor little fellows ! could not read, so she used to kneel down by her bed with one on each side of her ; and then, taking the card of prayers in her hand, she would go through them slowly, and the little boys would say the words after her. There were often very rough and bad people in the room—white people, Indians, and black people—but Annie did not mind them ; and when they saw that she was trying to do right, they were always quiet while she and the little boys said their prayers. Think how glad the clergyman was when he heard all this !

But now another trouble came. Some terribly wrong things were done—I cannot tell you what—both in Sunday school and in some other places. Suspicion fell upon this poor Indian girl, and another girl said she had seen Annie do them. It was all very dreadful, and the police had to inquire into the matter, and for a time it seemed as if Annie would have to go to prison. The poor child wept

bitterly over it all, declaring that she was innocent. The clergyman did not know what to think ; for as she had told stories before, he was afraid she might be doing the same now. I think you would have been sorry for her if you had seen her as she stood begging to be trusted. "Please, father, believe me. I know I told stories before, but indeed I am not now. I did not do these things. Please, father, do believe I am telling you true now."

She was so earnest that he did believe her, and I am glad to say that by the help of the police he found out that she was innocent, and that the girl who had laid the blame on her was really the one who had done all the wrong. That bad girl was sent to prison, but Annie remained in Sunday school.

There was no reason now to wait, and so Annie was baptized, and made a member of CHRIST, a child of GOD, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven.

Very soon after this Easter Day came, and oh, how happy Annie was ! As the children went in procession around the Church carrying their beautiful banners and singing hymns, if you had been there you might have seen her delighted face as, for the first time in her life, she was trusted to carry a banner in the Church to the glory of JESUS CHRIST, her Saviour and her King. Happy because she carried the banner, but far happier still because she knew that her sins were washed away, and that she was now a child of GOD. No child had a brighter Easter Day than she.

After this all went well for a time. Annie was always in school with her little brothers, and they too were baptized, and she and they together tried their best to live like JESUS CHRIST, and the clergyman began to hope that perhaps their parents might become good.

I have told you that these parents were very wicked, and it seemed as if they got worse every day. When the clergyman found this he was afraid lest they should make Annie bad again. If she stayed with them they would want her to lie and steal and do many other bad things, for they all got their living by sin. So he asked the parents if they would let her go away to live if he could find her a nice place, and they promised that they would.

A happy home was found in another clergyman's house in the country ; a lady belonging to the same Church provided clothes that she might have nice things to go with ; all was ready, and the day was fixed for her to go. But I am sorry to say that she never went.

She came to Sunday school on the last Sunday to say good-bye to the clergyman and receive her last blessing. The next day she was to go to the lady for her clothes and railway ticket, and then go to her new home, but she never went to the lady.

Very early that morning those wicked parents got up and took Annie and her little brothers, and the few things they had, and ran away. No one knew where they went, nor where they are now ; they went where they were not known, and there

they hid themselves. They were afraid that if Annie left them she would never lie or steal for them again, nor do anything wrong for them, and so they took her quite away.

This is more than two years ago, and the clergyman has never seen or heard anything of his Indian child since. As he goes about the streets of the city, and sometimes in other parts of the country, and sees here and there dark faces, he often looks to see if among them is one he knows, but so far he has always been disappointed.

Sometimes when he thinks of Annie he is very sad, wondering what has become of her, and whether she has been led into sin. But then again, he remembers that she was God's child, and that He can watch over her, and if only she will remember Him and pray to Him, He will surely keep her from all temptations. God the Holy Ghost, Who came to her when she was baptized, will never leave her nor forsake her.

Children, this is a true story, every word of it, except that I have changed Annie's name, and I have told it to you because I want you to think of her. Will you when you say your prayers sometimes say a prayer that God will watch over her and bring her back to her Church again if it is His Will ; or that if that cannot be, that He will keep her from all sin and help her to live like JESUS CHRIST on earth, and at last come to His Kingdom in Heaven? How joyful if you and she together meet before the throne to praise JESUS CHRIST, the children's Saviour and the children's King.

Go forward, then, dear children, from Whitsunday determined to follow your Lord JESUS to the end of your life, and looking for Him to call you to Himself in your Heavenly Home.

May His Blessed Spirit speak always in your hearts, and keep you pure and make you strong, and may no temptation or sin ever keep you from listening to Him when He is striving to make you perfect like JESUS CHRIST, your Saviour and your King—

“Thou Whom JESUS from His throne
Gave to cheer and help His own,
That they might not be alone :
Hear us, Holy Spirit.

Keep us in the narrow way,
Warn us when we go astray,
Plead within us when we pray :
Hear us, Holy Spirit.

Holy, loving, as Thou art,
All Thy sevenfold gifts impart,
Nevermore from us depart :
Hear us, Holy Spirit.”

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the 1990s, the number of people with a mental health problem has increased by 50% (Mental Health Foundation 1999).

There is a growing awareness of the need to address the needs of people with mental health problems in the community. The Department of Health (1999) has set out a vision for the future of mental health services, which includes a focus on preventing mental health problems, supporting people with mental health problems in the community, and providing specialist services for people with severe mental health problems. The vision is based on the principles of recovery, which emphasizes the importance of helping people to live full and meaningful lives, despite their mental health problems. The vision also emphasizes the importance of working in partnership with people with mental health problems and their families and carers.

One of the key challenges in implementing this vision is the need to develop a workforce that is equipped to meet the needs of people with mental health problems in the community. This requires a focus on training and development, as well as on creating a supportive work environment. The Department of Health (1999) has set out a number of key areas for focus, including: (1) developing a workforce that is equipped to meet the needs of people with mental health problems in the community; (2) creating a supportive work environment; and (3) working in partnership with people with mental health problems and their families and carers.

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